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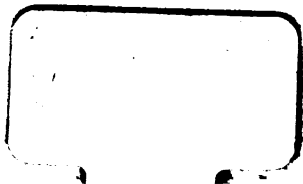
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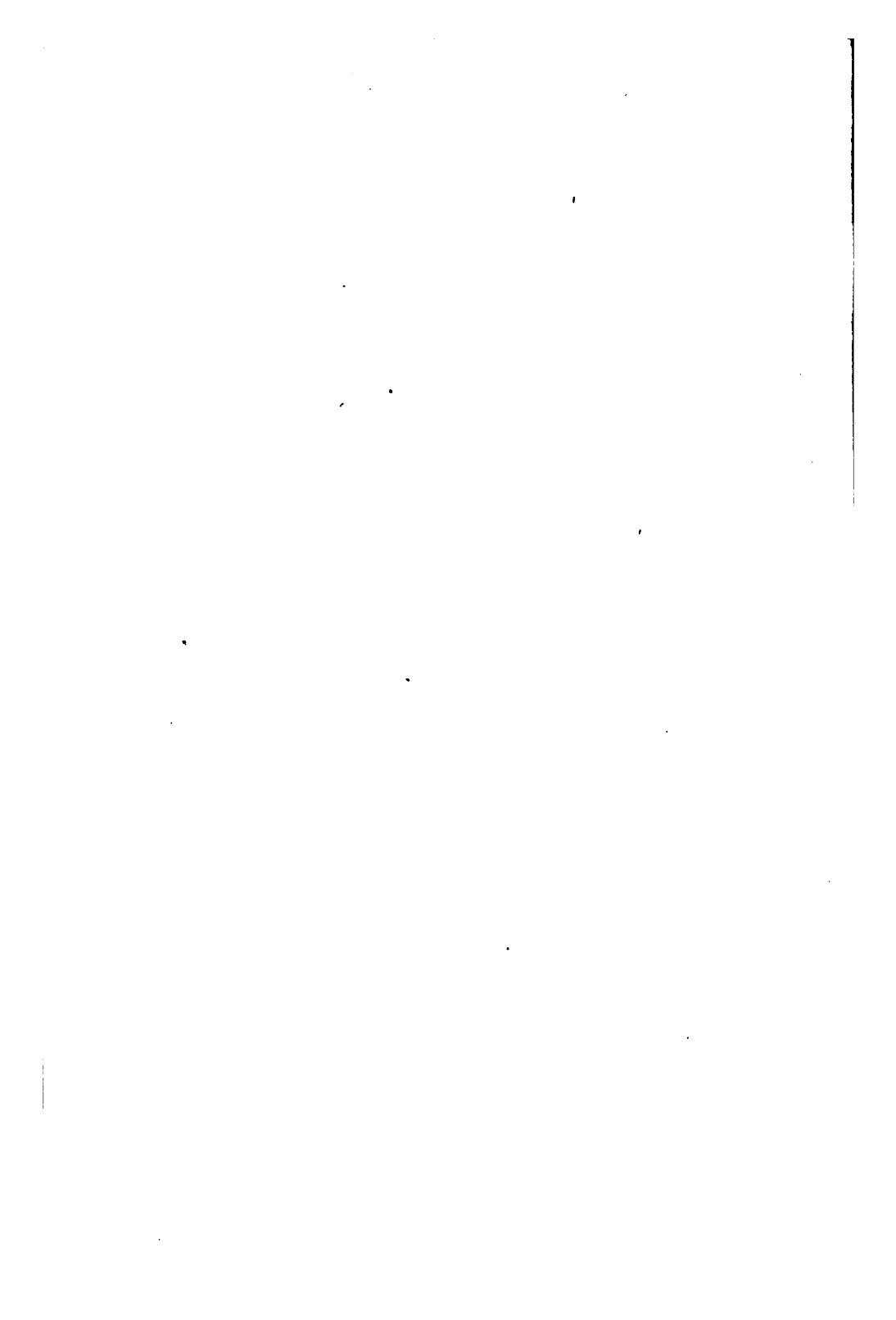


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UNDER THE
DOLLY BOUGH

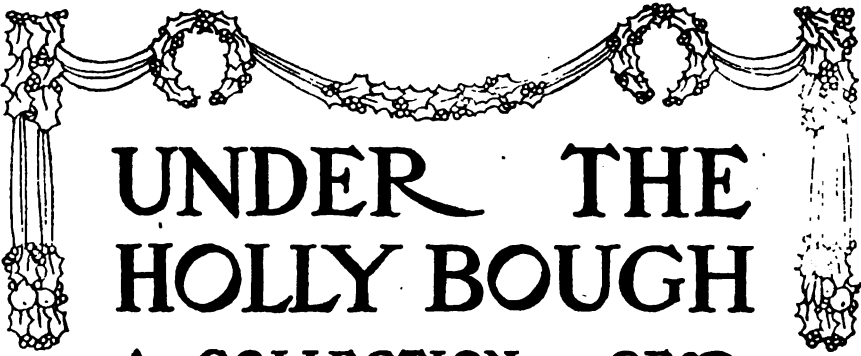


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“But this is—this is Molly”



UNDER THE HOLLY BOUGH

A COLLECTION OF
CHRISTMAS POEMS

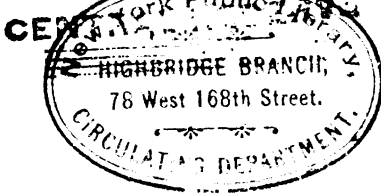
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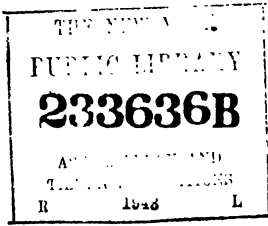
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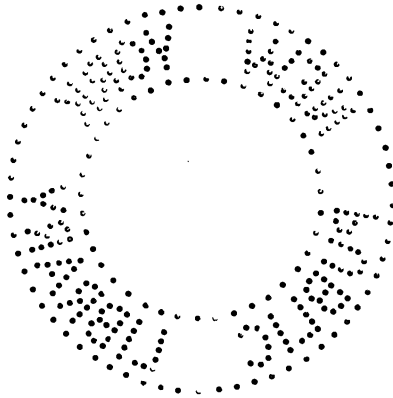


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Published October, 1907





PREFACE

A COMPILATION of this nature I trust will never lack readers. The "Peace, good-will to men" mood steals over us at the magic word—Christmas; its sentiments of fellowship and charity fill the human heart and make all the world kin for this day at least. From the time of "Royal Rome" with its Cæsars, to the present, hearts have responded to the familiar greeting, "Merry Christmas."

This collection presents the subject in many phases: from the holy sound of the Christmas chimes, heralding the Day of days, to the merry laugh of the little child over its toys.

Christmas has ever been a favorite subject with poets, and many sublime hymns have been sung to it in all ages, so that it has not been difficult to include here many of the fine things written by the older English poets. I have endeavored to make the collection as complete as possible within the

PREFACE

space allowed, but ask your indulgence if an old favorite has been omitted.

I leave it to the reader to select that which appeals most to his fancy, hoping those who are sorrowful may be comforted; those who are happy may be charitable; and all those who love the mistletoe and holly bough may find something to their liking.

My grateful thanks are here tendered to Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Harper & Brothers, The Century Co., Charles Scribner's Sons, Lippincott's Magazine, Bobbs-Merrill Co., Albert Brandt, "Life," and Forbes & Co., for kindly allowing me to use copyright poems.

I also wish to state my indebtedness to individual authors for their gracious assistance and permission to quote from their writings.

I. R. W.



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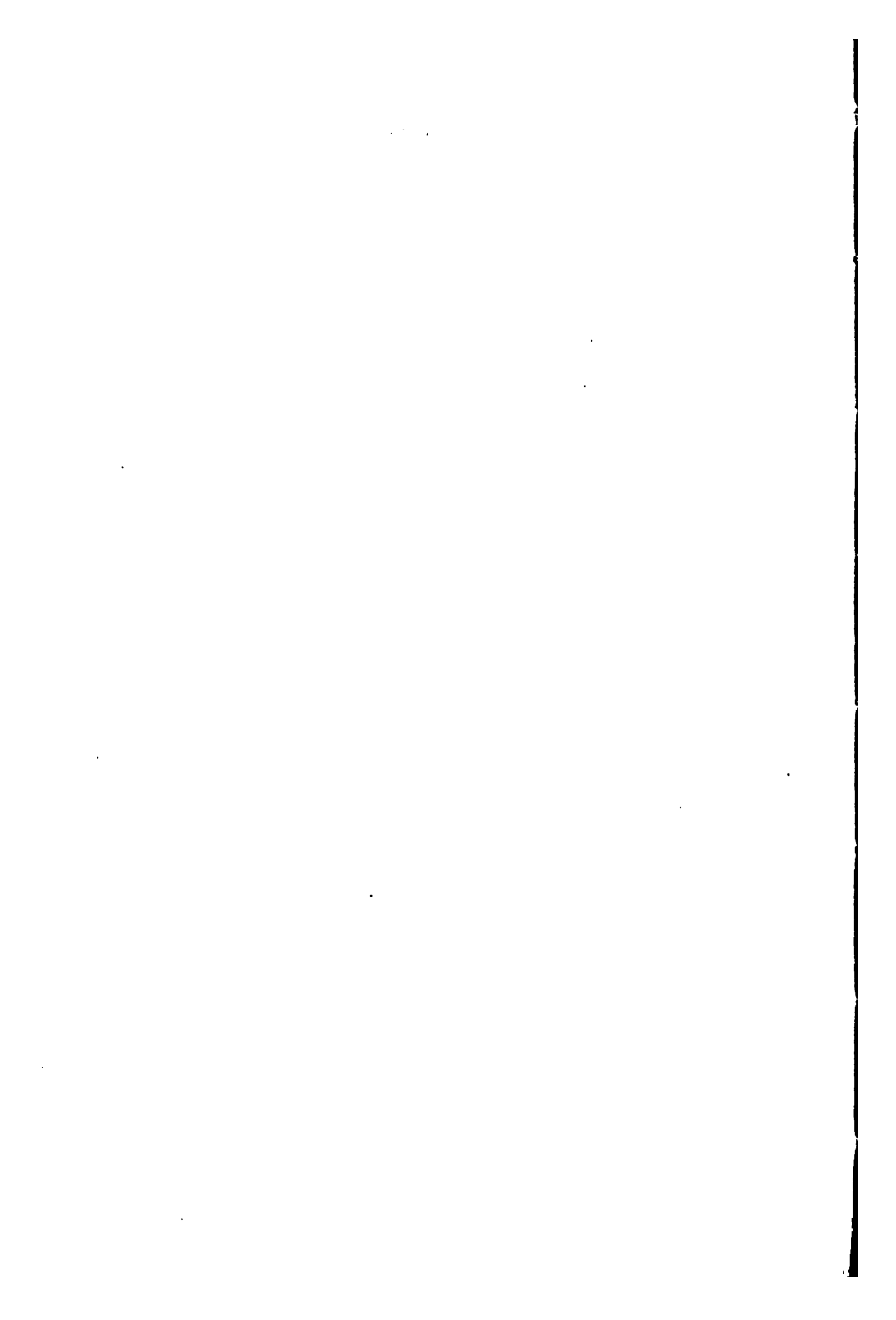
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**CHRISTMAS CHEER AND GOOD
FELLOWSHIP**





UNDER THE HOLLY BOUGH

YE who have scorned each other,
Or injured friend or brother,
In this fast-fading year;
Ye who, by word or deed,
Have made a kind heart bleed—
Come gather here.

Let sinned against and sinning
Forget their strife's beginning,
And join in friendship now;
Be links no longer broken,
Be sweet forgiveness spoken
Under the holly bough.

Ye who have loved each other,
Sister and friend and brother,
In this fast-fading year,
Mother and sire and child,
Young man and maiden mild—
Come gather here.
And let your hearts grow fonder,
As memory shall ponder
Each past unbroken vow:
Old loves and younger wooing

Are sweet in the renewing
Under the holly bough.

Ye who have nourished sadness,
Estranged from hope and gladness,
In this fast-fading year;
Ye with o'erburdened mind,
Made aliens from your kind—
Come gather here.
Let not the useless sorrow
Pursue you night and morrow;
If e'er you hoped, hope now—
Take heart, uncloud your faces,
And join in our embraces
Under the holly bough.

CHARLES MACKAY.

CHRISTMAS

CHRISTMAS comes! He comes, he comes,
Ushered with a rain of plums;
Hollies in the windows greet him;
Schools come driving past to meet him;
Gifts precede him, bells proclaim him,
Every mouth delights to name him;
Wet and cold, and wind and dark,
Make him but the warmer mark;
And yet he comes not one-embodied,
Universal's the blithe Godhead,
And in every festal house
Presence hath ubiquitous;
Curtains, those snug room-enfolders,
Hang upon his million shoulders;
And he has a million eyes
Of fire, and eats a million pies,
And is very merry and wise;
Very wise and very merry,
And loves a kiss beneath the berry.

LEIGH HUNT.

THE MAHOGANY TREE

CHRISTMAS is here;
Winds whistle shrill,
Icy and chill,
Little care we;
Weather without,
Sheltered about
The mahogany tree.

Once on the boughs
Birds of rare plume
Sang, in its bloom;
Night-birds are we;
Here we carouse,
Singing, like them,
Perched round the stem
Of the jolly old tree.

Here let us sport,
Boys, as we sit—
Laughter and wit
Flashing so free.
Life is but short—



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“The winds whistle shrill,
Icy and chill.”

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When we are gone,
Let them sing on,
Round the old tree.
Pile up the coals;
Fill the red bowls,
Round the old tree!

Drain we the cup—
Friend, art afraid?
Spirits are laid
In the Red Sea.
Mantle it up;
Empty it yet;
Let us forget,
Round the old tree!

Evenings we knew,
Happy as this;
Faces we miss,
Pleasant to see.
Kind hearts and true,
Gentle and just,
Peace to your dust!
We sing round the tree.

Care, like a dun,
Lurks at the gate:
Let the dog wait;
Happy we'll be!
Drink, every one;
Sorrows, begone!
Life and its ills,
Duns and their bills,
Bid we to flee.
Come with the dawn,
Blue-devil sprite;
Leave us to-night,
Round the old tree!

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY.

THE MISTLETOE

WHEN winter nights grow long,
And winds without grow cold,
We sit in a ring round the warm wood-fire,
And listen to stories old!
And we try to look grave (as maids should be);
When the men bring in the boughs of the Laurel
tree.

*O the Laurel, the evergreen tree!
The poets have laurels, and why not we?*

How pleasant, when night falls down
And hides the wintry sun,
To see them come in to the blazing fire,
And know that their work is done;
Whilst many bring in, with a laugh or rhyme,
Green branches of Holly for Christmas time!
*O the Holly, the bright green Holly,
It tells (like a tongue) that the times are jolly!*

Sometimes (in our grave house,
Observe, this happeneth not),
But, at times, the evergreen laurel boughs

And the holly are all forgot!
And then! what then? why, the men laugh low,
And hang up a branch of the mistletoe!

*O brave is the laurel! and brave is the holly!
But the Mistletoe banisheth melancholy!
Ah, nobody knows, nor ever shall know,
What is done—under the Mistletoe.*

BRYAN WALLER PROCTOR.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

'TIS MERRY 'neath the mistletoe,
When holly-berries glisten bright;
When Christmas fires gleam and glow,
When wintry winds so wildly blow,
All, all the meadows round are white—
'Tis merry 'neath the mistletoe!

How happy then are Fan and Flo,
With eyes a-sparkle with delight!
When Christmas fires gleam and glow,
When dimples come and go,
And maidens shriek with feignéd fright—
'Tis merry 'neath the mistletoe!

A privilege 'tis then, you know,
To exercise time-honored rite;
When Christmas fires gleam and glow,
When loving lips may pout, although
With other lips they oft unite—
'Tis merry 'neath the mistletoe!

If Florry then should whisper "No!"
Such whispers should be stifled quite.

When Christmas fires gleam and glow;
If Fanny's coy objecting "Oh!"

Be strangled by a rare foresight—
'Tis merry 'neath the mistletoe!

When rosy lips, like Cupid's bow,

Assault provokingly invite,

When Christmas fires gleam and glow,

When slowly falls the sullen snow,

And dull is drear December night—

'Tis merry 'neath the mistletoe!

J. ASHBY-STERRY.

CHRISTMAS COMES AGAIN

LET me be merry now, 'tis time;
The season is at hand
For Christmas rhyme and Christmas chime,
Close up, and form the band.

The winter fires still burn as bright,
The lamp-light is as clear,
And since the dead are out of sight,
What hinders Christmas cheer?

Why think or speak of that abyss
In which lies all my Past?
High festival I need not miss,
While song and jest shall last.

We'll clink and drink on Christmas Eve,
Our ghosts can feel no wrong;
They reveled ere they took their leave—
Harken, my Soldier's Song:

"The morning air doth coldly pass,
Comrades, to the saddle spring;
The night more bitter cold will bring
Ere dying—ere dying.

Sweetheart, come, the parting glass;
Glass and sabre, clash, clash, clash,
Ere dying—ere dying.
Stirrup-cup and stirrup-kiss—
Do you hope the foe we'll miss,
Sweetheart, for this loving kiss,
Ere dying—ere dying?"

The feasts and revels of the year
Do ghosts remember long?
Even in memory come they here?
Listen, my Sailor's Song:

"O my hearties, yo heave ho!
Anchor's up in Jolly Bay—
Hey!
Pipes and swipes, hob and nob—
Hey!
Mermaid Bess and Dolphin Meg,
Paddle over Jolly Bay—
Hey!
Tars, haul in for Christmas Day,
For round the 'varsal deep we go;
Never church, never bell,

For to tell
Of Christmas Day.
Yo heave ho, my hearties O!
Haul in, mates, here we lay—
Hey!”

His sword is rusting in its sheath,
His flag furled on the wall;
We'll twine them with a holly-wreath,
With green leaves cover all.

So clink and drink when falls the eve;
But, comrades, hide from me
Their graves—I would not see them heave
Beside me, like the sea.

Let not my brothers come again,
As men dead in their prime;
Then hold my hands, forget my pain,
And strike the Christmas chime.

ELIZABETH STODDARD.

THE CHRISTMAS FEELING

I LIKE the Christmas Feeling that is filling all the
air,

That fills the streets and busy stores, and scatters
everywhere;

I like the easy manner of the people on the
street,

The bundle-laden people, and the shop-girls smiling
sweet.

There's a glow of warmth and splendor in the
windows everywhere,

There's a glow in people's faces which has lately
stolen there;

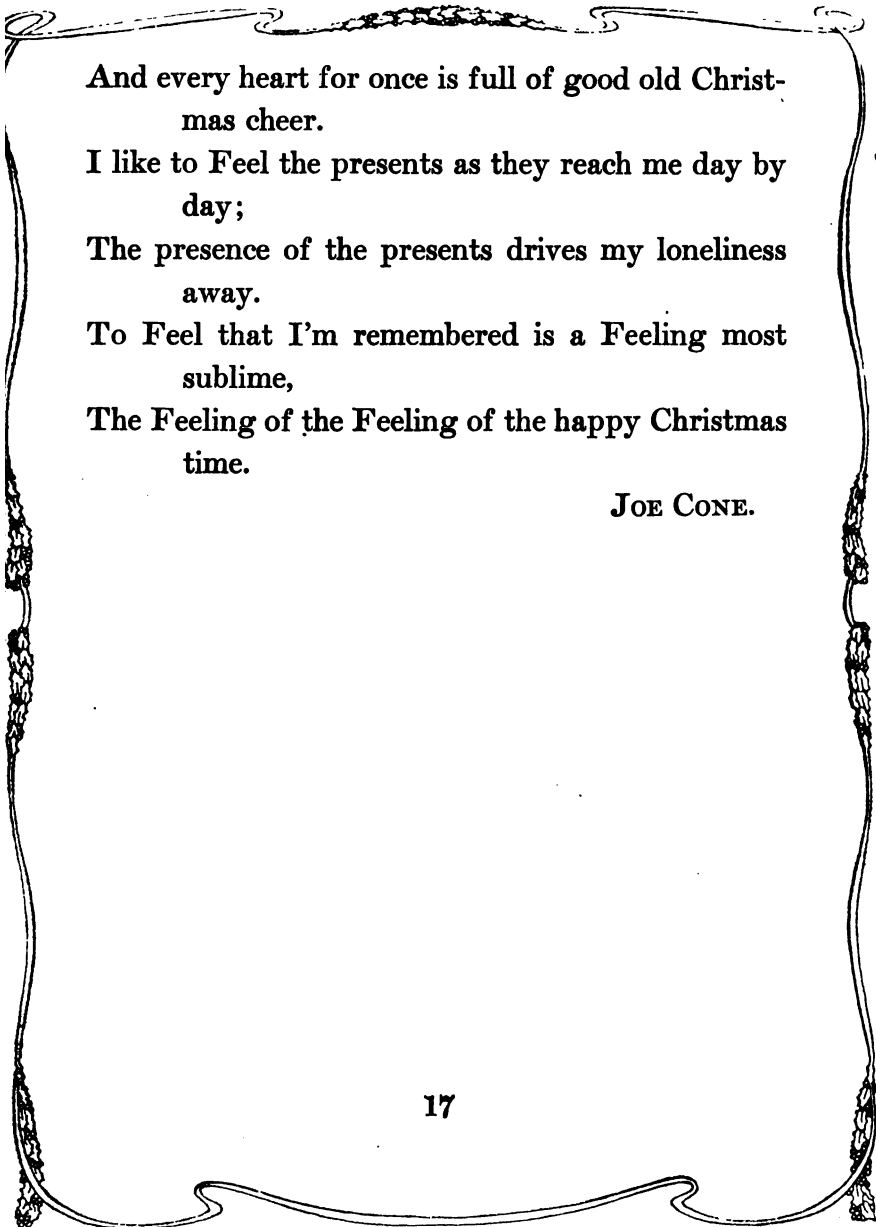
And everywhere the bells ring out with merry peal
and chime,

Which makes me like the Feeling of the happy
Christmas time.

I like the Christmas Feeling; there is nothing can
compare

With the free and kindly spirit that is spreading
everywhere;

The rich, the poor, the young and old, all catch its
atmosphere,



And every heart for once is full of good old Christmas cheer.

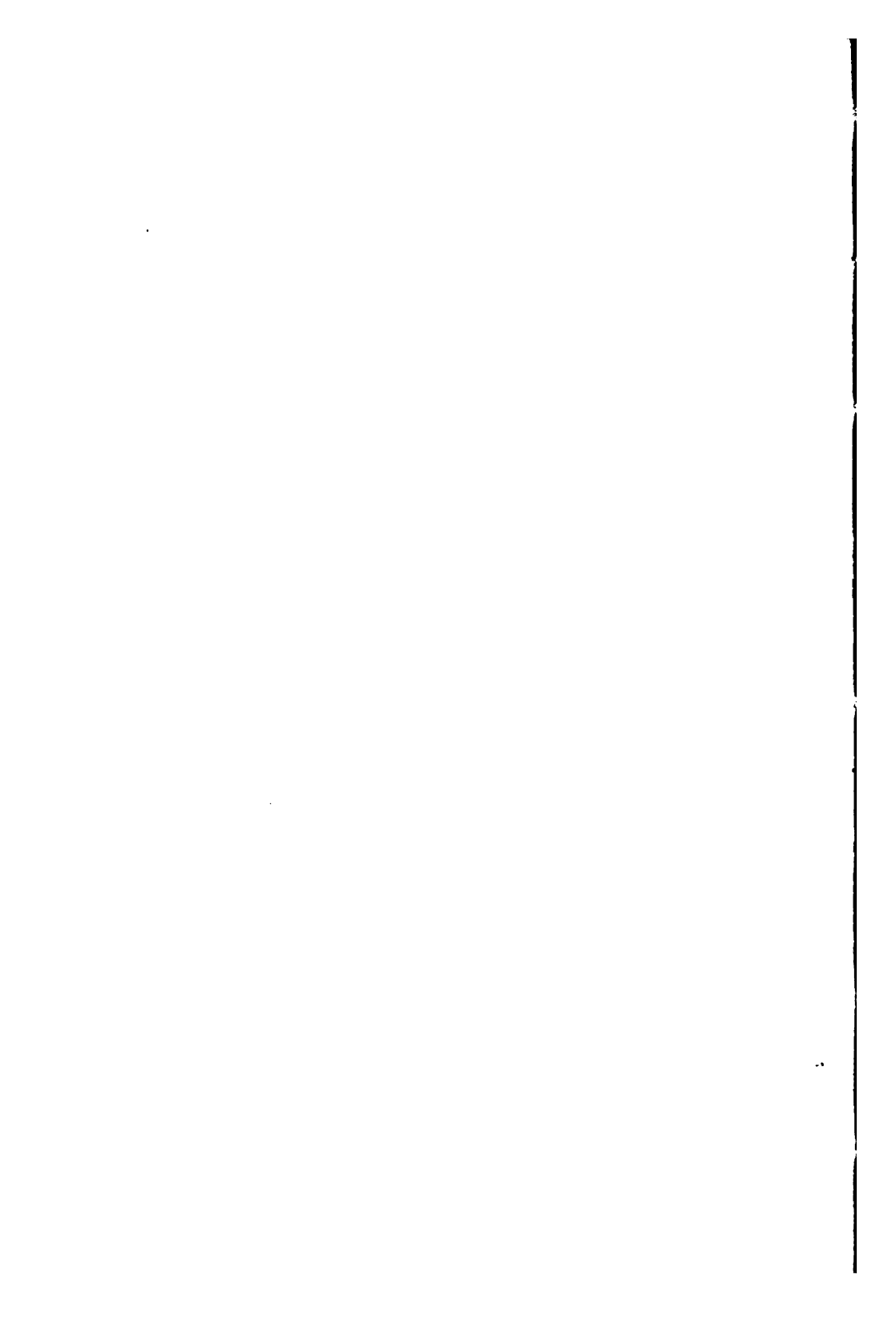
I like to Feel the presents as they reach me day by day;

The presence of the presents drives my loneliness away.

To Feel that I'm remembered is a Feeling most sublime,

The Feeling of the Feeling of the happy Christmas time.

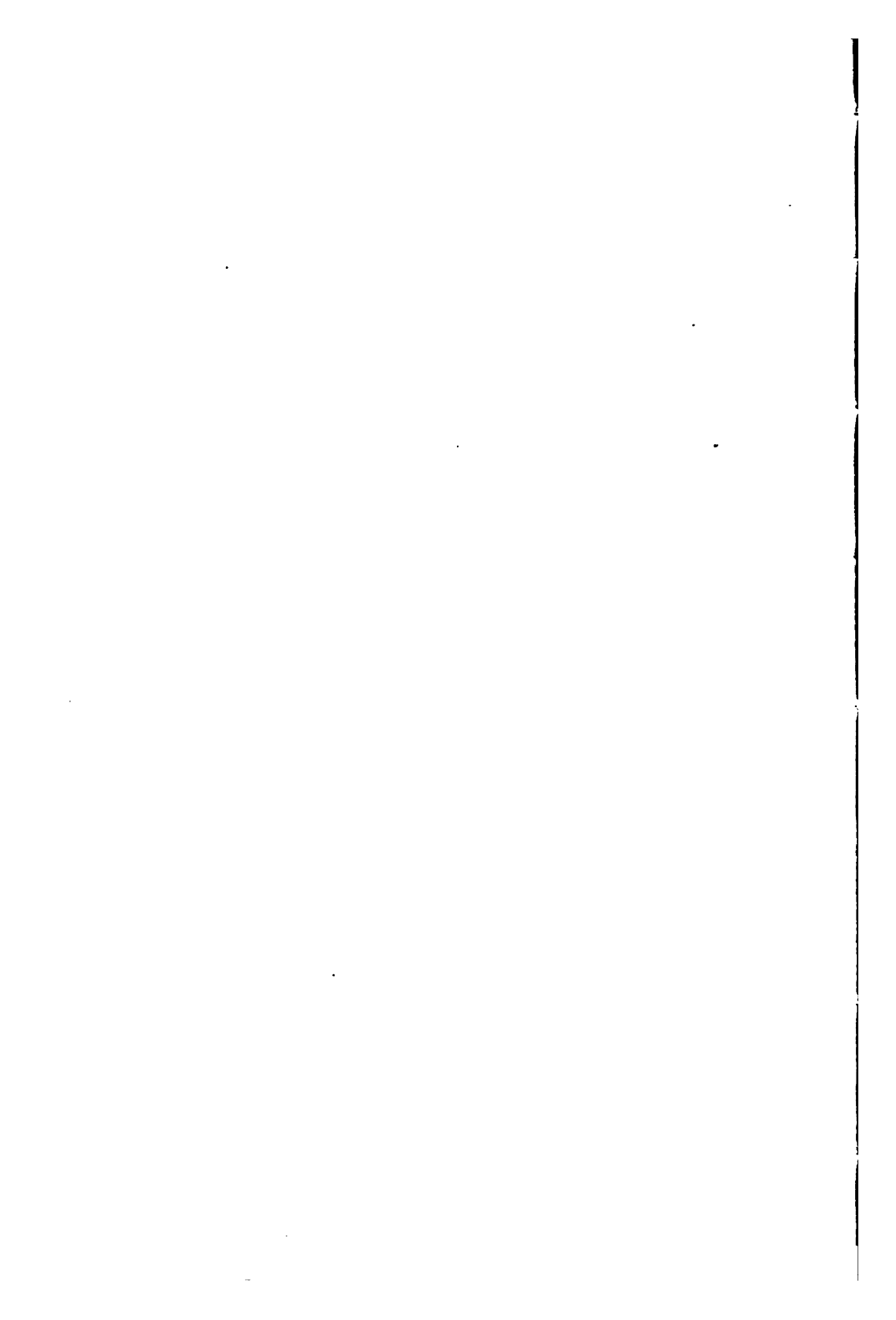
JOE CONE.



14

CHRISTMAS BELLS





CHRISTMAS BELLS

THE time draws near the birth of Christ:
The moon is hid, the night is still;
The Christmas bells from hill to hill
Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,
From far and near, on mead and moor,
Swell out and fail, as if a door
Were shut between me and the sound:

Each voice four changes on the wind,
That now dilate, and now decrease,
Peace and good-will, good-will and peace,
Peace and good-will. to all mankind.

ALFRED TENNYSON.

THE CHRISTMAS PEAL

SWINGING across the belfry tower,
The bells ran backward all the hour;
They rang, they reeled, they rushed, they roared;
Their tongues tumultuous music poured.
The old walls rocked, the peals outswept,
Far up the steep their echoes leapt,
Soaring and sparkling till they burst
Like bubbles round the topmost horn,
That reddens to the hint of morn,
That halts some trembling star the first;
And all the realms of ice and frost
From field to field those joy-bells tossed.
They answered from their airy height;
They thrilled; they loosed their bands for flight;
They knew that it was Christmas night!

Where awful absences of sound
The gorge in death's dumb rigor bound,
Below, and deep within the wood,
Windless and weird the black pines stood.
The iron boughs, slow swaying, rose
And fell, and shook their sifted snows,
And stirred in every stem and branch



*"They rang, they reeled, they rushed, they roared ;
Their tongues tumultuous music poured "*

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To the wild music in the air
From far, lone upper regions, where
Loose plunged the silver avalanche.
All up and down the valley-side
Those iron boughs swayed far and wide;
They heard the cry along the height;
They paused in time with that glad flight;
They knew that it was Christmas night!
You who, with quickening throbs, shall mark
Such swells and falls, swim on the dark,
As crisp as if the clustered rout
In starry depths sprang chiming out,
As if the Pleiades should sing,
Lyra should touch her tenderest string,
Aldebaran his spear-heads clang,
Great Betelguese and Sirius blow
Their mighty horns, and Fomalhaut,
With wild, sweet breath, suspended hang—
Know 'tis your heart-beats, with those bells,
Loosen the snow-clouds' vibrant cells,
Stir the vast forests on the height—
Your heart-beats answering to the light
Flashed earthward the first Christmas night!

HARRIET PRESCOTT SPOFFORD.

THE CHRISTMAS DINNER BELL

Now listen for the Christmas bells, that ring out
loud and clear

A welcome for the holidays, the best of all the year.
From the smallest to the greatest, they add their
cheery song

To swell the living chorus which gaily floats along.

Oh, the merry Christmas bells!

Oh, the merry Christmas bells!

There's nothing like the music of the merry Christ-
mas bells.

There's a tiny little tinkle when the moon is shin-
ing bright,

When Santa Claus comes traveling, with his rein-
deer prancing light,

And they ring a hearty promise of the treasures
to be found

When the breakfast bell shall waken happy young-
sters—blesséd sound!

Oh, the merry midnight bell!

Oh, the early morning bell!

When children rub their sleepy eyes, and hurry
down pell-mell.

But a bell is ringing later, and the echo of its noise
Is the jolliest in all the world to merry girls and
boys.

Does any music ever heard such wondrous visions
bring

Of everything delightful, as that jingle, jingle,
jing?

If you listen you will hear

All its promise of good cheer,

As it adds its clang of greeting to this crowning
of the year.

How it laughs amid its din,

As it rings the people in!

How the children wait and wonder, all impatient
to begin!

And their bonny eyes are bright

At the gay and goodly sight

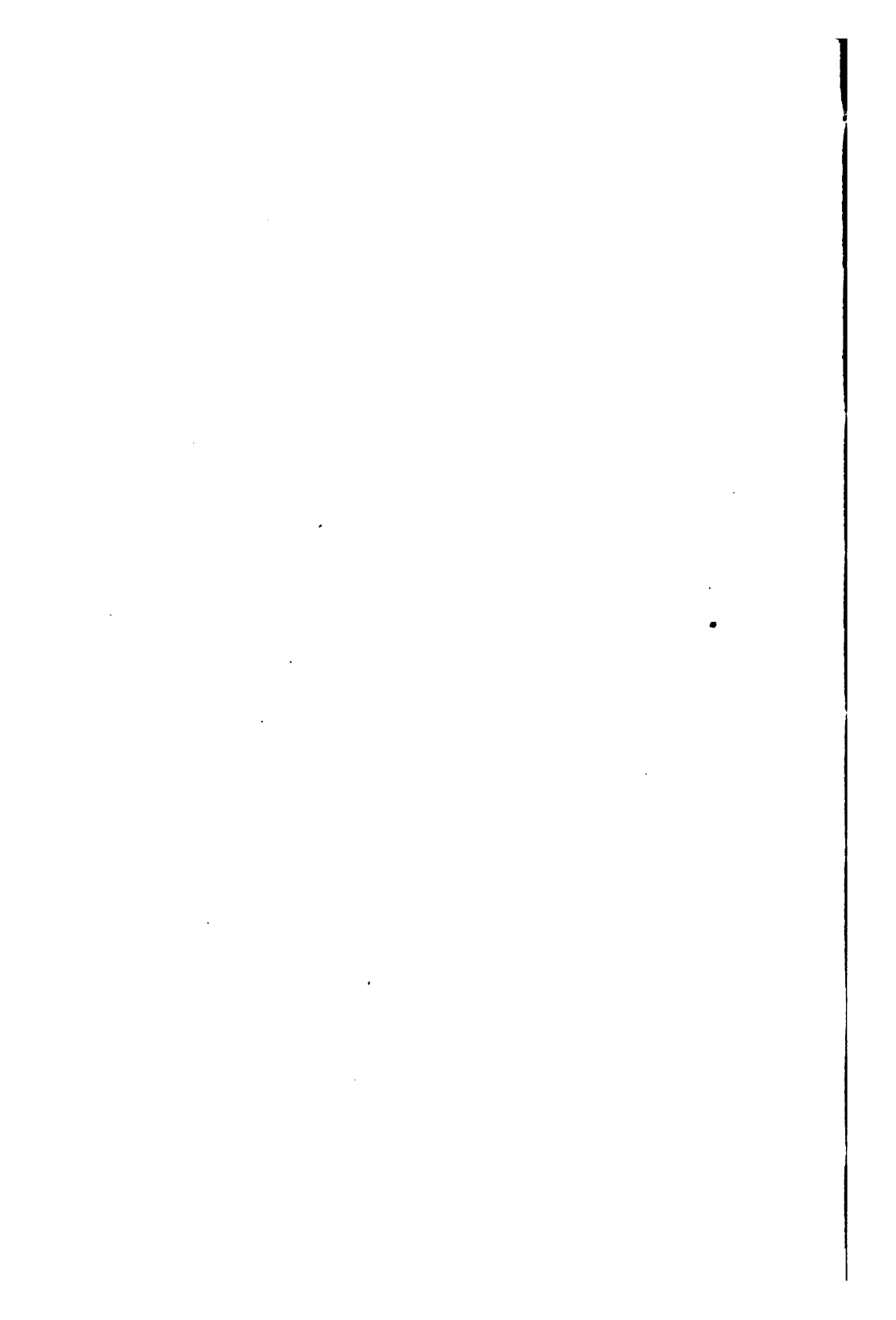
Of the dainties and the dainties, and the sparkle
and the light.

Oh, of all the bells, the bell

With a tale of joy to tell!

Oh, the jolly, jolly jingle of the Christmas dinner
bell!

SIDNEY DAYRE.



THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS





A CHRISTMAS CHANT

A TRUCE to all our bickerings, a short farewell to
hate,

For Love, with all its retinue, stands knocking at
the gate!

Let antique Mirth sweep from the hearth the ashes
of Despair,

And light old fires of revelry to lay the Ghost of
Care!

What tho' the world of rabblement hath trailed us
in the street!

We're Kings to-night, and Fate shall crouch a
vassal at our feet!

For we will drink nepenthe from the flagon of old
times,

While Love, from his high campanile, shall peal his
Christmas chimes.

What tho' the World hath caught us in the winter
of his tears,

And led our fine ambitions thro' a wilderness of
years!

From the desert, consecrated by endurance, we
come forth,

And our unrebuking spirits, o'er defeat, proclaim
our worth.

To-night we stand above the storm, where men and
angels meet,

Old moonlights silvering all the hills, life's wreck
beneath our feet;

While our thoughts, like benedictions, run to
rhythm and to rhyme,

As Love, on bells of Memory, rings out his Christ-
mas chime!

So set the yule-logs blazing! For to-night must
Life assume,

The cap and bells, and flying feet, and Grief forget
her gloom:

We'll have no skulking spectres 'round to mar our
regal mirth—

Every face must catch its glowing from the firelight
on the hearth;

Every heart must beat a measure that shall breathe
of prayer and praise,

Like the echoes of old pleasures from the halls of
other days—

The bells of inspiration peal in Fancy's far-off
clime!

'Tis our lost selves of better days that ring this
Christmas chime!

Ring out! ring out! with silver shout, winged voices
of the bells,

And hither summon all who sleep in Mem'ry's
magic dells!

First, bid her come, now nameless, in the robes she
used to wear,

The roses glowing in her cheek, the sunlight in her
hair;

Her gentle spirit breaking upon her lips in smiles,
Like a tranquil river flowing about its rosy
isles—

That beauty whose enchantment about all hearts
is flung;

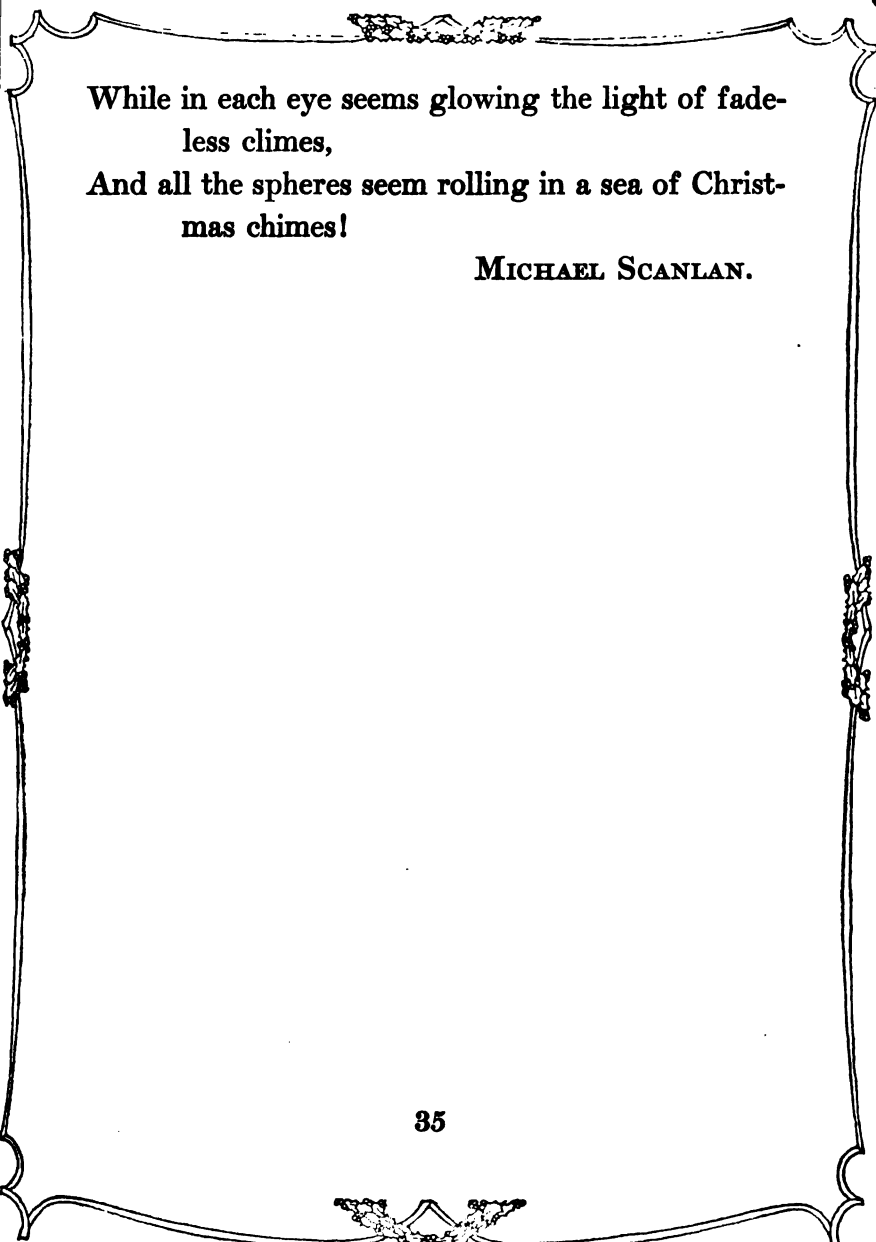
By the poets sublimated, by the minnesinger
sung!

Bid the young all come in laughter, and the old in
quiet grace;

Every dimple, every wrinkle—old-time beauties—
on each face!

Let Woman come in sweetness, and Manhood
clothed in power,
With Childhood's rosy weakness, and Girlhood in
its flower;
And Grief shall lose dominion, and Love assume
control,
And all life's cold misgivings shall be lifted from
the soul;
While, to gild the gloomy present, we'll ring in the
olden times,
Like a ship with blessings freighted, on the rolling
Christmas chimes!

So, a truce to all our bickerings, a long farewell to
Hate;
To Love, and all his retinue, fling open wide the
gate!
We've had some dreams of death and graves, and
partings and hot tears,
And Sorrow told her litanies into our 'wildered ears!
'Twas all life's fever fantasy! Our friends are by
our side—
The maiden and the lover, the bridegroom and the
bride—



While in each eye seems glowing the light of fade-
less climes,
And all the spheres seem rolling in a sea of Christ-
mas chimes!

MICHAEL SCANLAN.

"THE LITTLE FELLER'S STOCKIN' "

O, it's Christmas Eve, and moonlight, and the
Christmas air is chill,
And the frosty Christmas holly shines and sparkles
on the hill,
And the Christmas sleigh-bells jingle and the
Christmas laughter rings,
As the last stray shoppers hurry, takin' home the
Christmas things;
And up yonder in the attic there's a little trundle-
bed,
Where there's Christmas dreams a-dancin' through
a sleepy, curly head;
And it's "Merry Christmas," Mary, once agin fer
me and you,
With the little feller's stockin' hangin' up beside
the flue.

'Tisn't silk, that little stockin', and it isn't much
fer show,
And the darns are pretty plenty 'round about the
heel and toe,

And the color's kind er faded, and it's sort er worn
and old,

But it really is surprisin' what a lot of love 't will hold;
And the little hand that hung it by the chimney
there along

Has a grip upon our heart-strings that is mighty
firm and strong;

So old Santy won't fergit it, though it isn't fine
and new—

That plain little worsted stockin' hangin' up beside
the flue.

And the crops may fail and leave us with our plans
all knocked ter smash,

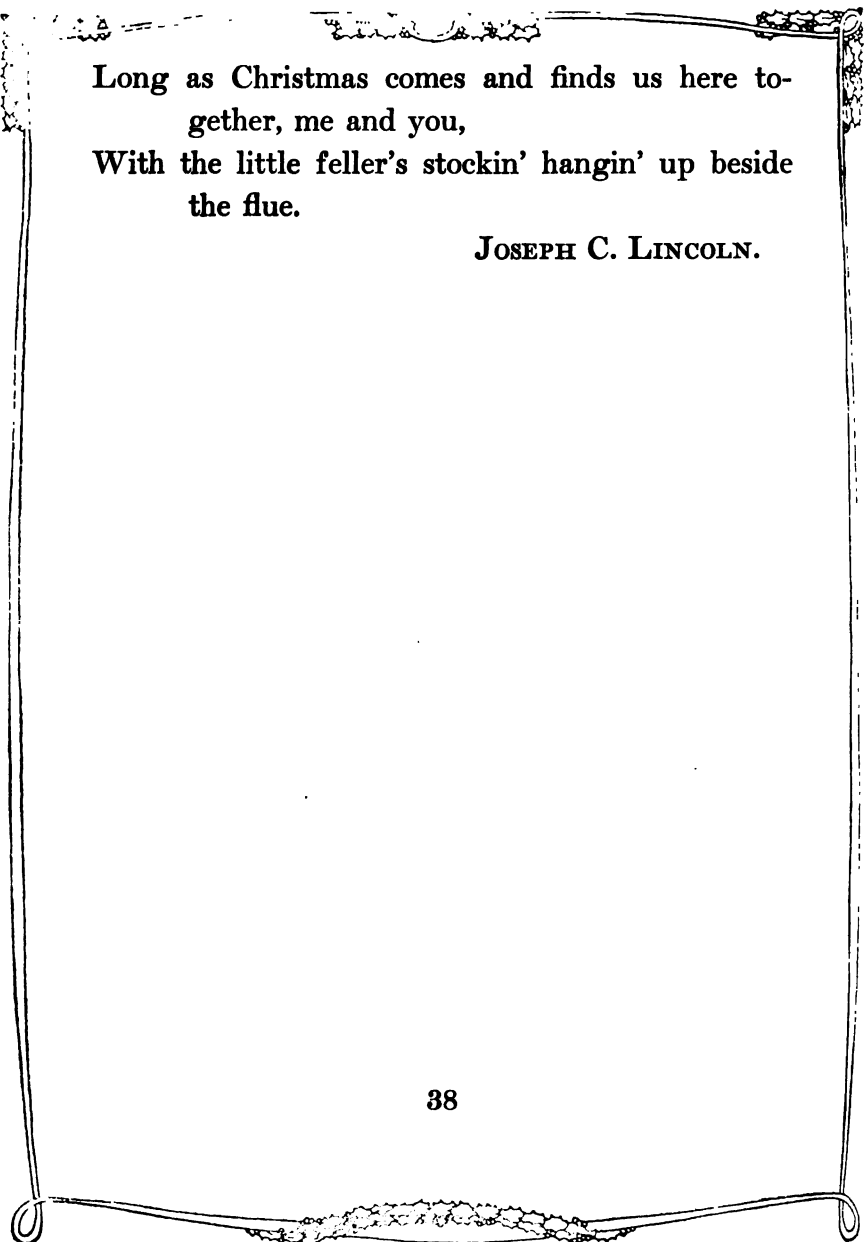
And the mortgage may hang heavy, and the bills
use up the cash;

But whenever comes the season, jest so long's we've
got a dime

There'll be somethin' in that stockin'—won't there,
Mary?—every time.

And if in amongst our sunshine there's a shower or
two of rain,

Why, we'll face it bravely smilin', and we'll try not
ter complain,



Long as Christmas comes and finds us here to-
gether, me and you,
With the little feller's stockin' hangin' up beside
the flue.

JOSEPH C. LINCOLN.

CROWDED OUT

Nobody ain't Christmas shoppin'
Fur his stockin',
Nobody ain't cotech no tukkey,
Nobody ain't bake no pie.
Nobody's laid nuthin' by;
Santa Claus don't cut no figger
Fur his mammy's little nigger.

Seems lak everybody's rushin'
An' er crushin';
Crowdin' shops an' jammin' trolleys,
Buyin' shoes an' shirts an' toys
Fur de white folks' girls an' boys;
But no hobby-horse ain't rockin'
Fur his little wore-out stockin'.
He ain't quar'lin', recollect,
He don't 'spec'
Nuthin'—it's his not expectin'
Makes his mammy wish—O Laws!—
Fur er nigger Santy Claus,
Totin' jus' er toy balloon
Fur his mammy's little coon.

ROSALIE M. JONAS.

THE CHRISTMAS SHEAF

“Now, GOOD-WIFE, bring your precious hoard,”

The Norland farmer cried;

“And heap the hearth, and heap the board,

For the blessèd Christmas-tide.

“And bid the children fetch,” he said,

“The last ripe sheaf of wheat,

And set it on the roof o’erhead,

That the birds may come and eat.

“And this we do for His dear sake,

The Master kind and good,

Who of the loaves He blest and brake,

Fed all the multitude.”

Then Fredrica, and Franz, and Paul,

When they heard their father’s words,

Put up the sheaf, and one and all

Seemed merry as the birds.

Till suddenly the maiden sighed,

The boys were hushed in fear,

As covering all her face, she cried,

“If Hansei were but here!”

And when, at dark, about the hearth
They gathered still and slow,
You heard no more the childish mirth,
So loud an hour ago.

And on their tender cheeks the tears
Shone in the flickering light;
For they were four in other years
Who are but three to-night.

And tears are in the mother's tone;
As she speaks, she trembles, too:
"Come, children, come, for the supper's done,
And your father waits for you."

Then Fredrica, and Franz, and Paul,
Stood each beside his chair;
The boys were comely lads, and tall,
The girl was good and fair.

The father's hand was raised to crave
A grace before the meat,
When the daughter spake; her words were brave,
But her voice was low and sweet:

"Dear father, should we give the wheat
To all the birds of the air?
Shall we let the kite and the raven eat
Such choice and dainty fare?"

"For if to-morrow from our store
We drive them not away,
The good little birds will get no more
Than the evil birds of prey."

"Nay, nay, my child," he gravely said,
"You have spoken to your shame;
For the good, good Father overhead
Feeds all the birds the same.

"He hears the ravens when they cry,
He keeps the fowls of the air;
And a single sparrow cannot lie
On the ground without His care."

"Yea, father, yea; and tell me this"—
Her words came fast and wild—
"Are not a thousand sparrows less
To Him than a single child—"

"Even though it sinned and strayed from home?"
The father groaned in pain
As she cried, "Oh, let our Hansei come
And live with us again!"

"I know he did what was not right"—
Sadly he shook his head;
"If he knew I longed for him to-night,
He would not come," he said.

"He went from me in wrath and pride;
God shield him tenderly!
For I hear the wild wind cry outside,
Like a soul in agony."

"Nay, it is a soul!" oh, eagerly
The maiden answered then;
"And, father, what if it should be he,
Come back to us again!"

She stops—the portal open flies;
Her fear is turned to joy.
"Hansei!" the startled father cries;
And the mother sobs, "My boy!"

'Tis a bowed and humbled man they greet,
With loving lips and eyes,
Who fain would kneel at his father's feet,
But he softly bids him rise;

And he says, "I bless thee, O mine own;
Yea, and thou shalt be blest!"
While the happy mother holds her son
Like a baby on her breast.

Their house and love again to share,
The Prodigal has come!
And now there will be no empty chair,
Nor empty heart in their home.

And they think, as they see their joy and pride
Safe back in the sheltering fold,
Of the Child that was born at Christmas-tide
In Bethlehem of old.

And all the hours glide swift away
With loving, hopeful words,
Till the Christmas sheaf at break of day
Is alive with happy birds!

PHOEBE CARY.

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YULE-TIDE HUMOR





THE MISTLETOE

It was after the maze and mirth of the dance,
Where a spray of green mistletoe swayed,
That I met—and I vow, that the meeting was
chance!—
With a very adorable maid.

I stood for a moment in tremor of doubt,
Then kissed her, half looking for war:
But—"Why did you wait, Sir?" she said, with a
pout,
"Pray, what is the mistletoe for?"

CLINTON SCOLLARD.

ENIGMA

WE go to church on Christmas day,
Mary and I, sedately,
My sweetheart softly gowned in gray,
With quiet step and stately;
She will not smile at what I say—
Her lashes veil her cheek—
What saint devout e'er knelt to pray
With face more calm and meek?
I would not dare to touch her hand,
Of very smiles I'm chary;
Some things no man may understand
But this is—this is Mary.

We go to Martin's Christmas night,
Molly and I, for dinner;
Whose smile so quick, whose eyes so bright
As those of my sweet sinner?
We chat, we laugh, we toast, we quite
Lose sight of the hereafter,
I—and my darling heart's delight—
Aglow with fun and laughter.

Beneath the cloth I press her hand,
My chum, so sweet and jolly;
Some things no man may understand,
But this is—this is Molly.

THEODOSIA GARRISON.

THE ELDER'S CHRISTMAS

So SHY the Elder was, so very young
When first he came his little flock among,
That all the deacons gave approving smile
And stout amens in good old-fashioned style.
And motherly old ladies far and near
Opened their hearts and doors to give him cheer;
Which work their daughters most demurely shared
And gave him what encouragement they dared!
So when the year had passed, the Elder went
And came among them, seeming well content.
Married and buried them; and seemed to reach
And touch the hearts of all who heard him preach—
Save one; who scorned his kindly-meant advance,
And parried every shy admiring glance
With such a roguish mischief-loving look—
The timid Elder in his gaiters shook!

Nathless the wilful maiden found anon
Her truant heart had from her keeping gone!
And being of a firm and settled mind,
She searched her curly head some way to find
To make the bashful suitor come and woo

And win and wed as braver men might do.
In vain she puzzled out some pretty plan—
Alack! 'twas thwarted by the foolish man,
Who, blinded by affection, never guessed
The secret that her manner half confessed.
To make him woo was easy; and to prove
That every day he deeper fell in love.
To husking party and to quilting-bee
He followed like her shadow, silently.
With motherly old ladies sat and talked,
Or even home with some prim maiden walked;
But if poor winsome Prue dared venture near,
He fell into an agony of fear!
In vain she wore her pretty flowered gown,
Or tied her hat with lilac ribbons down.
His fond eyes followed her; but he grew red
And stammered if she spoke to him—and fled!
Now Prue's good mother, innocent of harm,
Still saw the girl's depression with alarm;
And exercised her kindly woman's wit
To find a way "to cheer her up a bit";
And thus it chanced one cold December day,
The ladies of the church in best array,
On Mrs. Weston's spotless tidies sat,

And filled the solemn parlor with their chat.
A little later when the talk of jam
And bombazine and ways of curing ham
Was quite exhausted, spoke one worthy dame
(To whom Prue Weston's guardian angel came!)
Of the young Elder, and his ministry,
And what their Christmas gift to him should be.
With much discussion, it was settled there
The gift should be a handsome easy-chair,
With this inscription, copied fair by Prue:
"A Merry Christmas-time we wish to you;
And pray accept this chair."
Behold, there came
An inspiration worthy of the name
To pretty Prue; who brightened so, needs be
Her mother "reckoned right about that tea."

On Christmas morning, from its usual place
In the oak pew, the Elder missed a face.
The Christmas sunlight suddenly grew dim;
A little cloud the service marred for him.
He walked home afterward with head down bent,
His study entered, listless and intent
On thoughts of her. Upon the table lay

A little note. He read in absent way:
"A Merry Christmas-time we wish to you.
Accept this chair—and all its contents too!"
He turned: against the crimson-cushioned chair
Floated a strand of pretty Prue's bright hair.
Across her roguish eyes their fringes fell
And hid the laughter and the tears as well.
"Accept this chair—and all its contents too!"
Once more he read the words.
And then he Knew!

FLORENCE MAY ALT.

CHRISTMAS IN NONSENSE LAND

WHEN Christmas comes in Nonsense Land,
They usher it in with a rubber band;
Their Yule-log is made of cannel coal,
And the Boar's Head's brought in the Wassail
Bowl.

They trim their Christmas trees with shears,
And they all wear earwigs on their ears.
By Singer machines their carols are sung,
And by a hangman their stockings are hung.

The King makes every one a gift
Of a circular sieve that will not sift,
While each of his subjects presents to him
A feathered fish that cannot swim.

As soon as it's light enough to see
Every one climbs his Christmas tree;
And there he stays till the sun goes down—
Oh, they're queer people in Nonsense Town.

CAROLYN WELLS.

KRISS KRINGLE

JUST as the moon was fading
Amid her misty rings,
And every stocking was stuffed
With childhood's precious things,
Old Kriss Kringle looked round,
And saw on the elm-tree bough,
High-hung, an oriole's nest,
Silent and empty now.

"Quite like a stocking," he laughed,
"Pinned up there on the tree!
Little I thought the birds
Expected a present from me!"
Then old Kriss Kringle, who loves
A joke as well as the best,
Dropped a handful of flakes
In the oriole's empty nest.

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH.

CHRISTMAS NEWS FROM THE NORTH

AUTOMOBILES in Lapland! Alas, then the end is
near!

Good-by to the old-time Santa, his cutter and
prancing deer;

Good-by to the blithesome jingle over the sleeping
roofs;

Good-by to the welcome clatter of horns and eager
hoofs;

Good-by to Donder and Blitzen and comrades fleet,
good-by—

They yield to the brake and lever and thumbscrews
X and Y!

Cometh the Christmas presents brought in a patent
way;

Cometh the modern Santa, guiding his motor-
sleigh!

Automobiles in Lapland! Those artist and writer
folks

Have predicted all too truly in pictures and rhymes
and jokes;

For, lo! from S. Claus a message—filled at this
very hour:

“Send me one large snow-auto of forty-reindeer
pow’r.”

In vain all his steeds, impatient, their antlered fore-
heads toss;

In vain may they stock their stomachs on frozen
fish and moss:

Their ardor avails them nothing; their craft is
termed passé;

Their master has eyes for only the callous motor-
sleigh.

Automobiles in Lapland! Beware, O seal, beware!
Out of the path, O walrus, and shuffling polar
bear!

There’s a shape on the sharp horizon, cleaving the
arctic night,

And the wond’ring borealis upleaps to see the sight!
There’s a brisk staccato rattle, a rasping and pierc-
ing whir—

Hurrah! ’tis the doughty Santa, A No. 1 chauffeur!
’Tis his brand-new deerless bob-sled, piled like a
loaded dray—

The biggest and best creation in the line of a motor-sleigh.

Twenty-fifth of December—and stockings empty hang!

Never of horn a tootle, never of drum a bang!

And trees in a million households are simply funeral pyres

Surrounded by weeping children who lack their hearts' desires!

For somewhere, far to the northward, marooned and alone, I ween,

His battery out of order—exhausted his gasolene—

Scanning the plain for reindeer, doomed to a long delay,

Is a moody and wrathful Santa, stalled in that motor-sleigh!

EDWIN L. SABIN

SHOE OR STOCKING?

IN HOLLAND, children set their shoes,
This night, outside the door;
These wooden shoes Knecht Clobes sees,
And fills them from his store.

But here we hang our stockings up
On handy hook or nail;
And Santa Claus, when all is still,
Will plump them, without fail.

Speak out, you "Sober-sides," speak out,
And let us hear your views;
Between a stocking and a shoe,
What do you see to choose?

One instant pauses Sober-sides,
A little sigh to fetch—
"Well, seems to me a stocking's best,
For wooden shoes won't stretch!"

EDITH M. THOMAS.

IF SANDY CLAWS WAS PA

I've often thought what fun 'twould be
If Sandy Claws was pa.
He surely would be good to me,
If Sandy Claws was pa.
He'd let me see the million toys
He makes fer little girls an' boys;
An' every single winter's day
I'd ketch on to the reindeer sleigh,
An' he'd be good an' wouldn't mind,
But jes' p'tend that he was blind,
An' wouldn't never *whip behind*,
If Sandy Claws was pa.

The reindeer'd take us 'way up high,
If Sandy Claws was pa.
They'd trot right through the air an' sky,
If Sandy Claws was pa.
An' pa would tell me how the deer
Could do a thing so awful queer,
An' why they stay up in the air
Without balloons to keep 'em there;
He'd tell me how they fly all night

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*"In Holland, children set their shoes,
This night outside the door"*

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Up past the stars so big and bright,
Without a single wing in sight,
If Sandy Claws was pa.

The Pole explorers would be blue,
If Sandy Claws was pa.
We'd find the Pole before they do,
If Sandy Claws was pa.

Fer we'd go there jes' like a streak;
It wouldn't take us half a week
To make the trip, ner half a day,
Ner half a night while on the way;
It's great ole time them reindeer make
When their slim legs gits wide awake—
Nor half a nour it wouldn't take,
If Sandy Claws was pa.

Each night there'd be a Christmas tree,
If Sandy Claws was pa.
An' one each day, besides, fer me,
If Sandy Claws was pa.
He'd tell me how he climbs right down
The red-hot chimbleys in the town,
An' how he ever, ever learnt

To never git his whiskers burnt.
But what's the use of thinkin' so?
These dreams is nice, but they don't go,
Fer pa ain't Sandy Claws, you know,
An' Sandy Claws ain't pa.

EARLE HOOKER EATON.

THE CYNIC'S CAROL

TRADITION calls for snow—no snow to-day;
Only the old abuses in the old, old way:
Mendicants cry, Give! and debtors, Wait! and
credit, Pay!

Because it's Xmas!

Some one brings tokening plush and celluloid,
Of use or beauty, sentiment or soul, devoid,
With fond but fatuous hope I shall be overjoyed,

Because it's Xmas!

A dame whose whim is to propitiate,
Sends me a china rooster filled with chocolate
Nougat, or some confection I abominate,

Because it's Xmas!

Upon her haughty lackey I bestow
My benediction, plus a crisping bill or so—
Noblesse oblige, though he's richer far, I know!

Because it's Xmas!

Obstreperous offspring of my kin and kith
Prate, over-confident, of a gift-bringing myth,

And hang appealing rows of stockings up forth-
with,

Because it's Xmas!

And trusting bird and beast must learn the fraud
That tends them to betray for festal greed or
gaud—

As if in sacrificial blood were holy laud!

Because it's Xmas!

The bells ring out their annual madd'ning chime,
The same old bells, the same old out-of-tune-and-
time!

And then my editor demands a maudlin rhyme,

Because it's Xmas!

MARGUERITE MERINGTON.

THE CELEBRATION OF CHRISTMAS





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CHRISTMAS-TIDE

SOME say that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawning singeth all night long.
And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad;
The nights are wholesome: then no planets strike,
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm—
So hallowed and so gracious is the time.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

WHEN CHRISTMAS COMES

WHEN Christmas comes with mirth and cheer,
To clasp the circlet of the year,
Then forth we go for holly and pine,
Our wreaths of evergreen to twine;
Then swift we trip across the snow,
To find the gleaming mistletoe;
And straight and tall and branching free,
We haste to choose the Christmas tree.

When Christmas comes, for mother and Kate
All sorts of sweet surprises wait;
And little fingers thrill with joy
As pretty gifts their skill employ.
When Christmas comes each tries her best
To make it beautiful for the rest,
And no one thinks of selfish ease,
But seeks his neighbor to serve and please.

When Christmas comes, there is none so poor
He will turn the beggar from his door;
When Christmas comes, the rich and great
Search out their brothers of low estate,

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"The children sing in the merry time"

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And the sleigh-bells ring, and the church bells chime,
The children sing in the merry time,
And smiles and greetings leap to lips
That long were set in grief's eclipse,
For angels of comfort come and go
Within the yule-log's radiant glow.

When Christmas comes, I think again
Heaven stoops to wish good-will to men,
And God who loves this earth of ours
With love once more the whole earth dowers;
And the Babe who slept on Mary's knee
Once more brings peace to you and me;
And storms may beat, and winds be wild,
But the lowly mother, the Holy Child.
As in the manger, charm us yet.
All strife and evil our souls forget,
And each believing worshipper
Brings gold and frankincense and myrrh,
And the tongues of hate are hushed and dumb,
When again the Christmas angels come.

MARGARET E. SANGSTER.

ON CHRISTMAS


WITH footstep slow, in furry pall yclad,
His brows enwreathed with holly never sere,
Old Christmas comes, to close the wanèd year,
And aye the shepherd's heart to make right glad;
Who, when his teeming flocks are homeward had,
To blazing hearth repairs, and nut-brown beer;
And views, well pleased, the ruddy prattlers dear
Hug the gray mongrel; meanwhile, maid and lad
Squabble for roasted crabs. Thee, sire, we hail,
Whether thine agèd limbs thou dost enshroud
In vest of snowy white and hoary veil,
Or wrapp'st thy visage in a sable cloud!
Thee we proclaim with mirth and cheer, nor fail
To greet thee well with many a carol loud.

FRANCIS BAMPFYLDE.




CHRISTMAS AT SEA

THE sheets were frozen hard, and they cut the
naked hand;
The decks were like a slide, where a seaman scarce
could stand;
The wind was a nor'wester, blowing squally off the
sea,
And the cliffs and spouting breakers were the only
thing a-lee.



We heard the surf a-roaring before the break of
day,
But 'twas only with the peep of light we saw how
ill we lay.
We tumbled every hand on deck, instanter, with a
shout,
And we gave her the maintops'l, and stood by to go
about.



All day we tacked and tacked between the South
Head and the North;
All day we hauled the frozen sheets and got no
further forth;

All day as cold as charity, in bitter pain and dread,
For very life and nature we tacked from head to
head.

We gave the South a wider berth, for there the tide-
race roared;
But every tack we made we brought the North
Head close aboard:
So's we saw the cliffs and houses, and the breakers
running high,
And the coast-guard in his garden, with his glass
against his eye.

The frost was on the village roofs as white as ocean
foam;
The good red fires were burning bright in every
'longshore home;
The windows sparkled clear, and the chimneys vol-
leyed out,
And I vow we sniffed the victuals as the vessel
went about.

The bells upon the church were rung with a mighty
jovial cheer,

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*“With footstep slow, in furry pelt yclad,
Old Christmas comes to close the waned year”*

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For it's just that I should tell you how (of all days
in the year)

This day of our adversity was blessed Christmas
morn,

And the house above the coast-guard's was the
house where I was born.

O well I saw the pleasant room, the pleasant faces
there,

My mother's silver spectacles, my father's silver
hair;

And well I saw the firelight, like a flight of homely
elves,

Go dancing round the china-plates that stand upon
the shelves.

And well I know the talk they had, the talk that
was of me,

Of the shadow on the household and the son that
went to sea;

And O the wicked fool I seemed, in every kind of
way,

To be here and hauling frozen ropes on blessed
Christmas day!

They lit the high sea-light, and the dark began to fall.

"All hands to loose topgallant sails," I heard the captain call.

"By the Lord, she'll never stand it," our first mate, Jackson, cried.

"It's the one way or the other, Mr. Jackson," he replied.

She staggered to her bearings, but the sails were new and good,

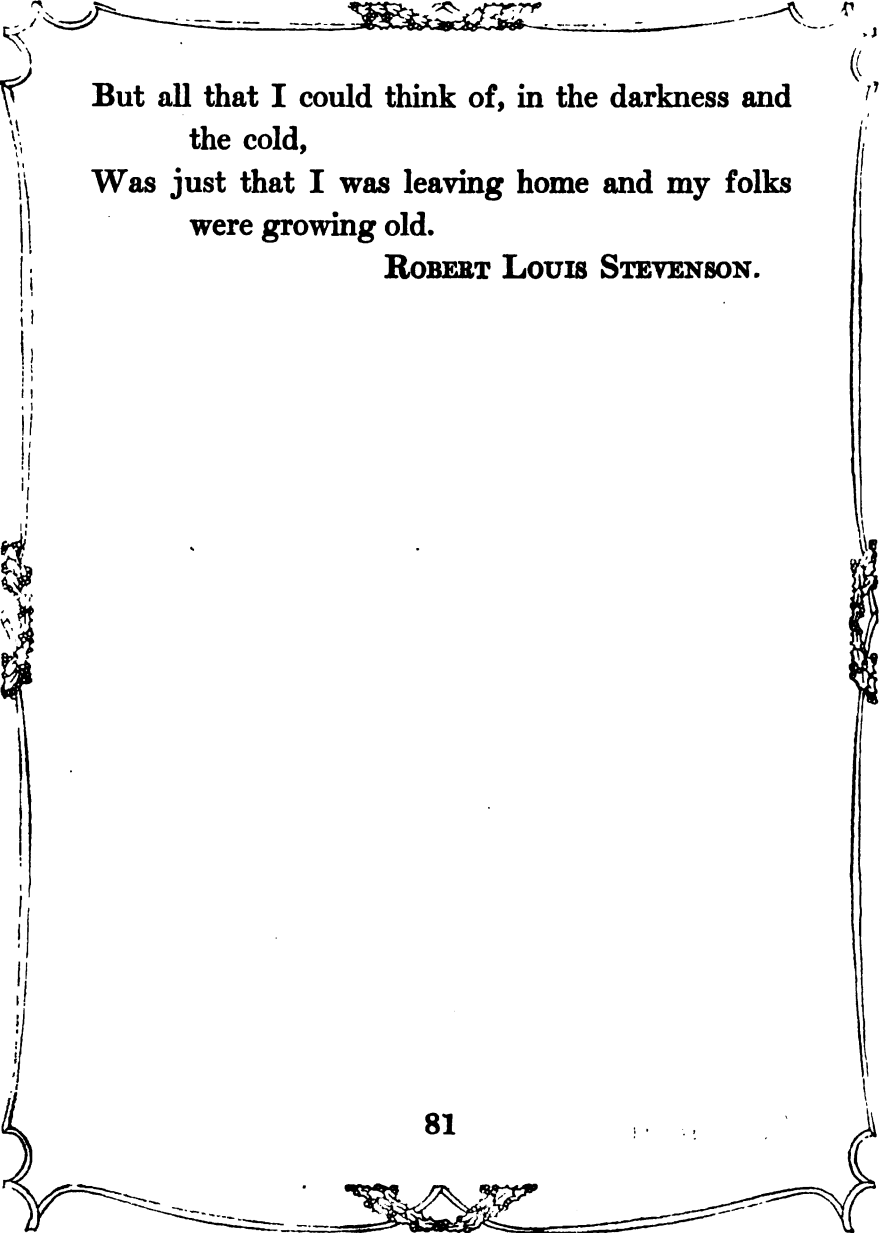
And the ship smelt up to windward just as though she understood.

As the winter's day was ending, in the entry of the night,

We cleared the weary headland and passed below the light.

And they heaved a mighty breath, every soul on board but me,

As they saw her nose again pointing handsome out to sea;



But all that I could think of, in the darkness and
the cold,
Was just that I was leaving home and my folks
were growing old.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

THE NORTHMAN'S CHRISTMAS TALE

IN SOUTHWARD lands, where, holly bright,
Glow happy hearths at Christmas-tide,
I've watched deep in the starry night
The warm snows wrap my countryside;
In the tropic climes all summerwise,
I've seen Yule roses twine the pale,
But once I saw the Christ Child rise,
With dawn, on an Alaskan trail.

Blue-cold the north-night walled us round,
Lost exiles from all human kind;
The fagots flared with sputtering sound,
And in his sleep a sledge-dog whined.
Eight weeks from somewhere in the snows,
Eight weeks beyond the call of man,
I lay that night—where, Heaven knows—
Some place 'twixt Skagway and Spokane.

I lay that night beside the flame;
I slept; men tell me that I dreamed.
But, Mary Mother, by Thy name!
I saw Him when the dawn light gleamed.

I saw Him in His baby gown,
Stooping to warm Him o'er the blaze—
And since that night I've knelt me down
And prayed upon my Christmas Days.

Shivered the little One, and crept
Cuddling beside me with a cry.
I wrapt Him warmly, till He slept—
The Christ Child slept—and so did I.
The wind howled through the leaden night,
Out of the dark the wolf-yelp rang,
But in my dream a Star shone bright,
And o'er the manger angels sang.

Sunless the dawn slid into day.
I wakened to a world new born;
And lo! the smiling Baby lay
Beneath my furs—on Christmas morn!
O blessed Heaven, pity those
Whose Saviour is a King to dread;
I pity them, as one who knows
The Christ that shared a trapper's bed.

To east and west and southward far,
In 'wilderling ways; my paths have lain.
My life hath known no holy star,
No churchly guide, no sacred fane;
But, under bright or barren skies,
On Christmas Eve I tell my tale,
For once I saw the Christ Child rise,
With dawn, on an Alaskan trail.

CHESTER FIRKINS.

CHRISTMAS MERRYMAKING

So now is come our joyful'st feast,
Let every man be jolly;
Each room with ivy leaves is drest,
And every post with holly.
Though some churls at our mirth repine,
Round your foreheads garlands twine;
Drown sorrow in a cup of wine,
And let us all be merry.

Now all our neighbors' chimneys smoke,
And Christmas logs are burning;
Their ovens they with baked meats choke,
And all their spits are turning.
Without the door let sorrow lie;
And, if for cold it hap to die,
We'll bury't in a Christmas pie,
And evermore be merry.

Now every lad is wondrous trim,
And no man minds his labor;
Our lasses have provided them
A bag-pipe and a tabor;

Young men and maids, and girls and boys,
Give life to one another's joys;
And you anon shall by their noise
Perceive that they are merry.

Rank misers now do sparing shun;
Their hall of music soundeth;
And dogs thence with whole shoulders run,
So all things there aboundeth.
The country folks themselves advance,
For crowdy-mutton's come out of France;
And Jack shall pipe, and Jill shall dance,
And all the town be merry.

Ned Squash hath fetched his bands from pawn,
And all his best apparel;
Brisk Ned hath bought a ruff of lawn,
With droppings of the barrel.
And those that hardly all the year
Had bread to eat or rags to wear,
Will have both clothes and dainty fare,
And all the day be merry.

86 2



*“Young Men and Maids, and Girls and Boys,
Give life to one another’s joys.”*

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ASTOR LENOX
TILDEN FOUNDATION

Now poor men to the justices
With capons make their errants,
And if they hap to fail of these,
They plague them with their warrants.
But now they feed them with good cheer,
And what they want they take in beer;
For Christmas comes but once a year,
And then they shall be merry.

Good farmers in the country nurse
The poor that else were undone;
Sour landlords spend their money worse
On lust and pride at London.
There the roysters they do play,
Drab and dice their lands away,
Which may be ours another day;
And therefore let's be merry.


The client now his suit forbears,
The prisoner's heart is eased;
The debtor drinks away his cares,
And for the time is pleased.
Though other purses be more fat,
Why should we pine or grieve at that?

Hang sorrow! care will kill a cat,
And therefore let's be merry.

Hark, how the wags abroad do call
Each other forth to rambling!
And you'll see them in the hall
For nuts and apples scrambling.
Hark, how the roofs with laughter sound!
Anon you'll think the house goes round:
For they the cellar's depth have found,
And there they will be merry.

The wenches with their wassail-bowls
About the streets are singing;
The boys are come to catch the owls,
The wild mare in is bringing.
Our kitchen boy hath broke his box,
And to the dealing of the ox
Our honest neighbors come by flocks,
And here they will be merry.

Now kings and queens poor sheep-cotes have,
And mate with everybody:



The honest now may play the knave,
And wise men play at nobby.
Some youths will now a-mumming go,
Some others play at Rowland-ho,
And twenty other gambols mo,
Because they will be merry.

Then wherefore in these merry days,
Should we, I pray, be duller?
No, let us sing some roundelays,
To make our mirth the fuller.
And whilst thus inspired we sing,
Let all the streets with echoes ring,
Woods and hills and everything
Bear witness we are merry.

GEORGE WITHER.

THE SETTLER'S CHRISTMAS EVE

IN A patch of clearing, scarcely more
Than his brawny double hands,
With woods behind and woods before,
The settler's cabin stands:
A little, low and lonesome shed,
With a roof of clapboards overhead.

Aye, low, so low the wind-warped eave
Hangs close against the door,
You might almost stretch a bishop's sleeve
From the rafter to the floor;
And the window is not too large, a whit,
For a lady's veil to curtain it.

The roof-tree's bent and knotty knees
By the settler's axe are braced,
And the door-yard fence is three felled trees
With their bare arms interlaced;
And a grape-vine, shaggy and rough and red,
Swings from the well-sweep's high, sharp head

And among the stubs, all charred and black,
Away to the distant huts,

Winds in and out the wagon-track,
Cut full of zigzag ruts;
And down and down to the sluggish pond,
And through and up to the swamps beyond.

And do you ask beneath such thatch
What heart or hope may be?
Just pull the string of the wooden latch,
And see what you shall see:
A hearth-stone broad and warm and wide,
With master and mistress either side.

And 'twixt them, in the radiant glow,
Prattling of Christmas joys,
With faces in a shining row,
Six children, girls and boys;
And in the cradle a head half-hid
By the shaggy wolf-skin coverlid.

For the baby sleeps in the shaded light
As gently as a lamb,
And two little stockings, scarlet bright,
Are hanging 'gainst the jamb;
And the yellow cat lies all of a curl
In the lap of a two-years blue-eyed girl.

On the dresser, saved for weeks and weeks,
A hamper of apples stands,
And some are red as the children's cheeks,
And some are brown as their hands;
For cakes and apples must stead, you see,
The rich man's costlier Christmas tree.

A clock that looks like a skeleton,
From the corner ticks out bold;
And that never was such a clock to run,
You would hardly need be told,
If you were to see the glances proud,
Drawn toward it when it strikes so loud.

The settler's rifle, bright and brown,
Hangs high on the rafter hooks.
And, swinging a hand's-breadth lower down,
Is a modest shelf of books:
Bible and hymn-book, thumbed all through,
"Baxter's Call," and a novel or two.

A branch of sumach, shining bright,
And a stag-horn, deck the wall,
With a string of birds' eggs, blue and white,
Beneath. But after all,

You will say the six little heads in a row
By the hearth-stone make the prettiest show.

The boldest urchin dares not stir;
But each heart, be sure, rebels
As the father taps on the newspaper
With his brass-bowed spectacles;
And knitting-needle with needle clicks,
As the mother waits for the politics.

He has rubbed the glass and rubbed the bow,
And now is a fearful pause;
"Come, Molly!" he says, "come, Sue! come, Joe!
And I'll tell you of Santa Claus!"
How the faces shine with glad surprise,
As if the souls looked out of the eyes!

In a trice the dozen ruddy legs
Are bare; and speckled and brown
And the blue and gray, from the wall-side peg
The stockings dangle down;
And the baby, with wondering eyes, looks out
To see what the clatter is all about.

“And what will Santa Claus bring?” they tease,

“And, say, is he tall and fair?”

While the younger climb the good man’s knees,

And the elder scale his chair;

And the mother jogs the cradle, and tries

The charm of the dear old lullabies.

So happily the hours fly past,

’Tis a pity to have them o’er;

But the rusty weights of the clock, at last

Are dragging near the floor;

And the knitting-needles, one and all,

Are stuck in the round, red knitting-ball.

Now, all on a sudden the father twirls

The empty apple-plate;

“Old Santa Claus don’t like his girls

And boys to be up so late!”

He says, “And I’ll warrant our star-faced cow

He’s waiting astride o’ the chimney now.”

Down the back of his chair they slide,

They slide down arm and knee;

“If Santa Claus is indeed outside,

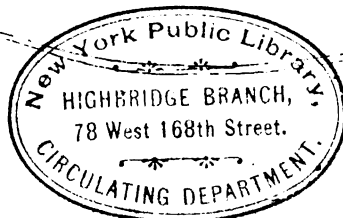
He shan’t be kept for me!”

Cry one and all; and away they go,
Hurrying, flurrying, six in a row.

In the mother's eyes are happy tears,
As she sees them flutter away;
"My man," she says, "it is sixteen years
Since our blessed wedding-day;
And I wouldn't think it but just a year,
If it wasn't for all these children here."

And then they talk of what they will do
As the years shall come and go:
Of schooling for little Molly and Sue,
And of land for John and Joe;
And Dick is so wise, and Dolly so fair,
"They," says the mother, "will have luck to spare!"

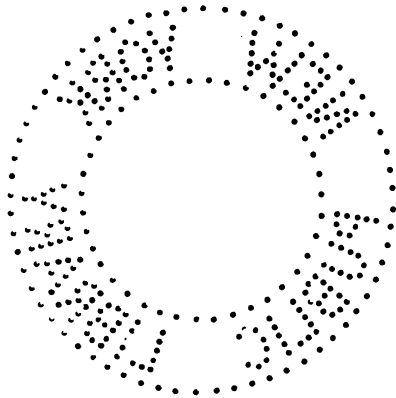
"Ay, ay, good wife, that's clear, that's clear!"
Then, with eyes on the cradle bent,
"And what if he in the wolf-skin here
Turned out to be President?
Just think! Oh, wouldn't it be fine—
Such fortune for your boy and mine!"



She stopped—her heart with hope elate—
And kissed the golden head;
Then, with the brawny hand of her mate
Folded in hers, she said:
“Walls as narrow, and a roof as low,
Have sheltered a President, you know.”

And then they said they would work and wait,
The good, sweet-hearted pair.
You must have pulled the latch-string straight,
Had you in truth been there,
Feeling that you were not by leave
At the settler's hearth that Christmas Eve.

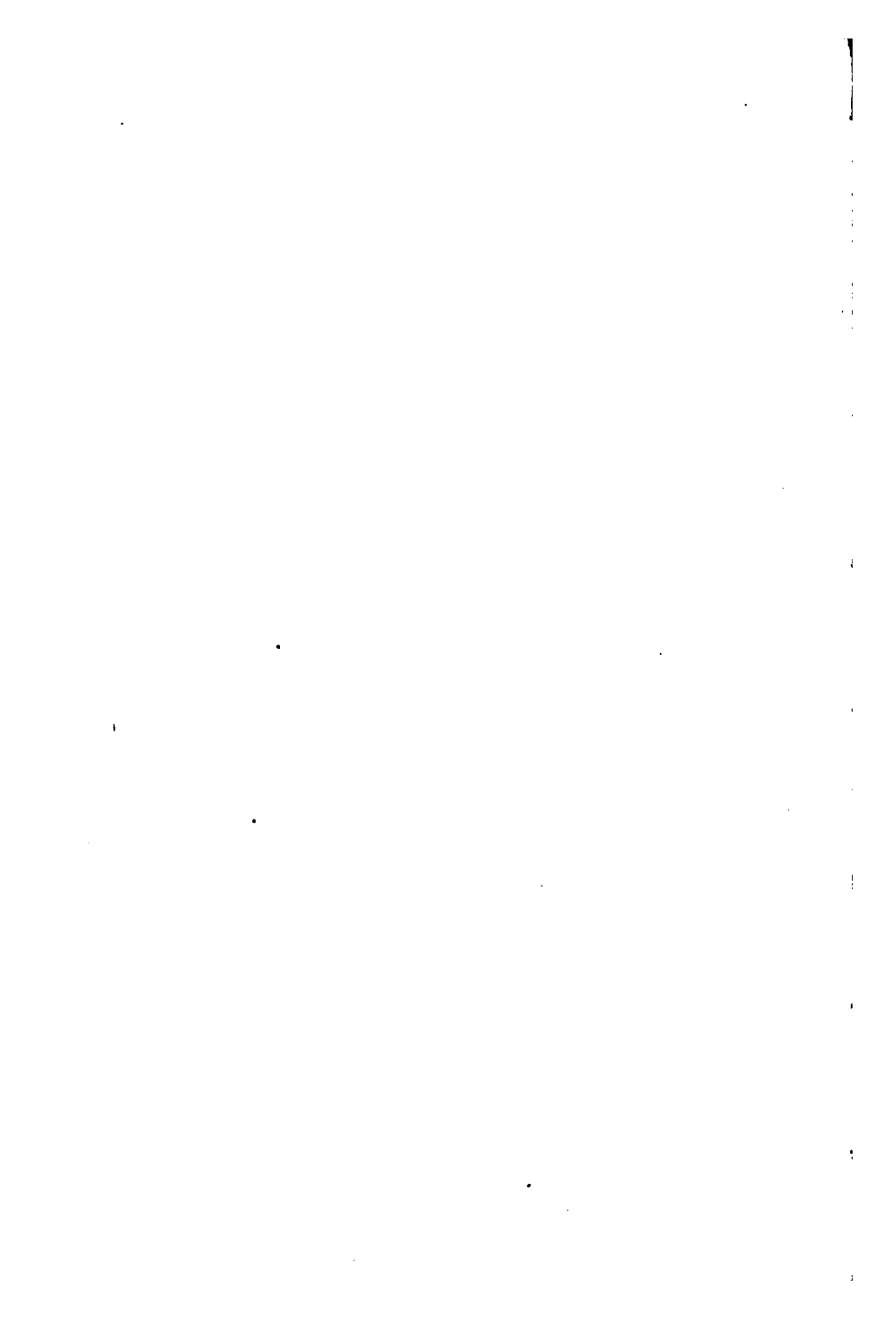
ALICE CARY.



**SANTA CLAUS, THE CHILDREN'S
FRIEND**



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SANTA CLAUS

I AM that mythical, mystical thing—
The little ones' monarch, the children's king!
The mightiest ruler on earth am I,
My subjects outnumber the stars in the sky.
I'm ruler by right of the children's leave,
And visit them all on a Christmas Eve.
My soldiers are goblins and good little elves,
With nothing to conquer but conquer themselves.
I call and invisible myriads come,
At first with a faint, indescribable hum,
Then louder and louder; and, chattering fast,
These dear little goblins go scampering past,
Till off in the distance the sound dies away.
Then back they come tumbling, and this what they
say:

“'An-a 'Au!

'An-ta Cau!

San-ta Claus!

San-ta Claus!

San-ta Claus!

'An-ta Cau!

'An-a 'Au!”

I'm king of the Northland, where, locked in the
snow,

Are mysteries arctic the world may not know;
While squadrons of icebergs stand guard evermore
And ships of the nations ne'er come to my door!
My cities are built without labor or cost
By the delicate hand of the architect, Frost;
With turreted castles on mountains of ice,
Like the palaces gleaming in Paradise;
Whose windows aglow make the universe bright,
Since Aurora has touched them with fingers of
light.

My electrical lamp on the North Pole that gleams
Is the bright polar star of the mariner's dreams.
I never get old, though my locks may be gray,
For a year unto me is a night and a day.

“'An-a 'Au!

'An-ta Cau!

San-ta Claus!

San-ta Claus!

San-ta Claus!

'An-ta Cau!

'An-a 'Au!”

My workshops are temples more grand to behold
Than diamond peaks in a sunset of gold;
With icicled truss like the rainbow in hue,
Where Hoarfrost paints nightly his fresco anew.
There courtiers are craftsmen and artisans peers,
There lords are mechanics and skilled engineers;
Each deft little goblin his genius employs
Throughout the long year manufacturing toys.
Then off on the wings of the frosty night air,
Each loaded with happiness, all he can bear;
That little ones all through the world may receive
The wealth of my kingdom on Christmas Eve!
On the snow-banks of heaven I come in my sleigh,
With elves and the goblins to herald the way:

“ 'An-a 'Au!

 'An-ta Cau!

 San-ta Claus!

 San-ta Claus!

 San-ta Claus!

 'An-ta Cau!

 'An-a 'Au!”

To overgrown children, and those over-wise,
I seldom appear in conventional guise;

But send forth the elves and the fairies who leave
Some comfort for each on a Christmas Eve:
Compassion, who knocks at the wealthy man's door,
While leaving a blessing, gets one for the poor.
Philanthropy bows, and the great millionaire
Returns the salute with a courtesy rare.
Mercy visits the sick, Plenty waits upon Want;
Hope drinks with Despair at Utopia's font.
Sweet Memory comes with her dreams of the past,
And Joy smiles with Sorrow while reveries last!
All these are invisible angels who bring
Peace on earth and good-will, while the fairies all
sing:

“ 'An-a 'Au!

'An-ta Cau!

San-ta Claus!

San-ta Claus!

San-ta Claus!

'An-ta Cau!

'An-a 'Au!”

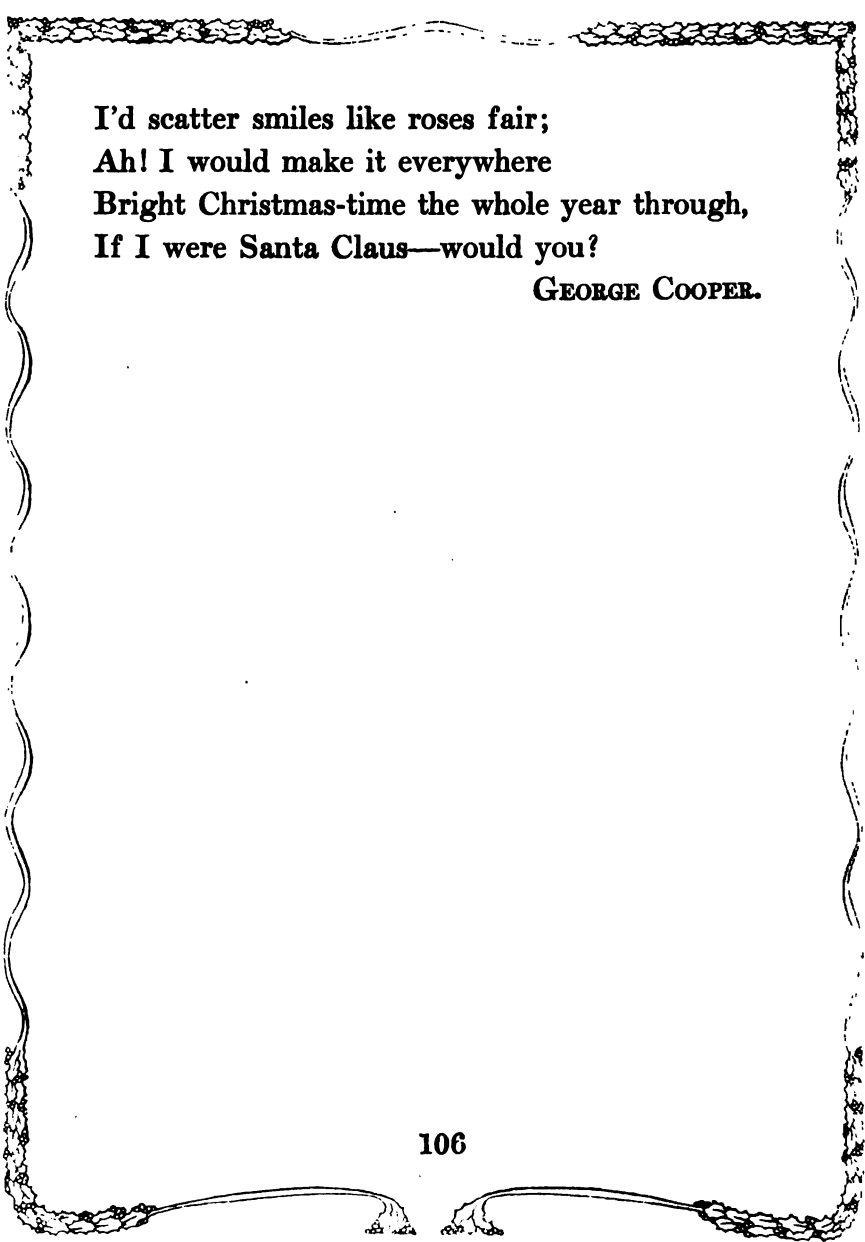
FRED EMERSON BROOKS.

IF I WERE SANTA CLAUS

If I were Santa Claus, I'd go
To every fireside, high or low;
I'd bring sweet joy to weeping eyes:
I'd carry dolls of wondrous size
To little girls in every land;
And every toy that could be planned
I'd furnish to the boys, brand-new,
If I were Santa Claus—would you?

If I were Santa Claus, I'd pay
A visit to the house each day;
I'd come and mend the broken toys!
I'd kiss the little girls and boys,
And fill their stockings every night,
And give them dreams of rare delight.
All the good I could, I'd do,
If I were Santa Claus—would you?

If I were Santa Claus, I'd seek
To help the poor and raise the weak;
When earth was white, when earth was green,
My jolly nose would still be seen;



I'd scatter smiles like roses fair;
Ah! I would make it everywhere
Bright Christmas-time the whole year through,
If I were Santa Claus—would you?

GEORGE COOPER.

UNCLE SANTA CLAUS

UNCLE Santa Claus, jolly old soul,
His face is round as a sugar bowl,
And his cheeks are as red as a rose,
And his hair has been touched by the snows
Of age, and its flaws
Scar the face of Santa Claus.

He will come with his bag full of toys,
For his little friends, the girls and boys;
Over the roof, with his team and sleigh,
He will haste, ere the break of day;
For no storm will he pause,
For brave is old Santa Claus.

Fast down the dark chimney he'll go,
And fill plates and stockings below,
Without waking the dreamers so sweet,
For he steps with such delicate feet;
If snow freezes, or thaws,
There's no trace of Santa Claus.

Here are jumping-jacks, so tall and thin,
Horses that run, and round tops that spin;

Knives, marbles, candies, oranges, rings,
Dolls, gloves, and all sorts of good things.

Now, pray, what's the cause
Of visits of Santa Claus?

He has more subjects than any king;
When holidays come, for each he'll bring
A present—so sleep, darling, to-night,
And rise when the morning strikes light.

He cares not for wealth "two straws."
Rich and poor love Santa Claus.

GEORGE BUNGAY.

THE BOY WHO HAS NO SANTA CLAUS

THE boy who has no Santa Claus—
So wistful, oh! so wan he looks
Through wondrous windows, making pause
To gloat upon the picture books,
The Giant-Killer, Mother Goose:
Alas! poor urchin, what's the use?

I saw him standing yesternight,
His nose against the frosty pane
Enamored of the fairy sight—
So fond, so friendless, oh! so fain
To grasp and beat the painted drum!
He dreamed of seeing Santa come.

So long he stood and looked within,
I thought his yearning gaze must charm
The stalwart soldier made of tin
To rise and follow through the storm,
And, standing guard above him, make
His dream come true ere he awake.

The jumping-jack, the candy cane,
The bugle and the hobby-horse—

I'd think they would be sick with pain
And sorrowful with deep remorse
Because they did not steal away
And in his squalid garret stay.

The boy who has no Santa Claus—
Oh, sadder far his sorrow is
Than all our grown-up woes, because
We have no wishes such as his:
The useless yearn of childhood, oh!
We cannot feel, we cannot know.

O little Johnny Loney Boy,
I'm sad and sorry for you, so!
You shouldn't miss the perfect joy
Of Christmas, for the years are slow.
If I'd the making of the laws
I'd give each boy a Santa Claus.

ROBERTUS LOVE.

A VISIT FROM ST. NICHOLAS

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through
the house

Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;
The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads;
And mamma in her kerchief, and I in my cap,
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap—
When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.
The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow
Gave a lustre of midday to objects below;
When what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a miniature sleigh and eight tiny reindeer,
With a little old driver, so lively and quick
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick!
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,
And he whistled and shouted, and called them by
name:

**“Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer and
Vixen!**

**On, Comet! on, Cupid! on, Donder and Blitzen!
To the top of the porch, to the top of the wall!
Now dash away, dash away, dash away all!”
As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky,
So up to the house-top the coursers they flew,
With the sleigh full of toys—and St. Nicholas, too.
And then in a twinkling I heard on the roof
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.
As I drew in my head, and turning around,
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.
He was dressed all in fur from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and
soot;**

**A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,
And he looked like a peddler just opening his pack.
His eyes, how they twinkled! his dimples, how
merry!**

**His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry;
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,
And the beard on his chin was as white as the snow.
The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,**

And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath.
He had a broad face and a little round belly
That shook, when he laughed, like a bowl full of
jelly.

He was chubby and plump—a right jolly old elf;
And I laughed, when I saw him, in spite of myself.
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread.
He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,
And filled all the stockings; then turned with a
jerk,

And laying his finger aside of his nose,
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose.
He sprang in his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle;
But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight:
“Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good-night!”

CLEMENT C. MOORE.

WILLIE'S LETTER TO SANTA CLAUS

"I've written a letter to Santa Claus;
Would you like to know the reason?
'Tis very plain, and just because
We've moved this present season.
I'm always called a happy child,
Yet for weeks I've had this worry—
Will Santa Claus know that we're here,
Or pass us in his hurry?

"I told him not to pass us by,
And gave our street and number—
He cannot tell by faces; why?
He comes while we all slumber;
Besides, I've had some other fears—
Our chimney is so narrow
It will not hold old Santa's wares,
It scarce would hold a barrow.

"I've given him quite a list of things;
Of dolls and little dishes,
Of skates and sleds, and kites and strings,
And many other wishes;

I said, 'Dear Santa, please do come,
Nor mind the narrow passage,
For every child within the home
Has sent to you this message.'

"And when I had the letter done,
And ready for addressing,
My heart was quite an anxious one,
This thought was so distressing—
Where does he live? the good old Saint!
'Tis said in lands all frozen;
But then there are so many such—
I s'pose there are a dozen.

"I took the letter, and I wrote,
*'For Santa Claus, the lover
Of little children. May this float
To where he keeps in cover.'*

And now I'm thinking all the time,
Will Santa like the letter?
And will he come with sleigh and chimes,
To make my heart feel better?"

ANNA D. WALKER.

TO SANTA CLAUS

WHEN I was but a little one,
How well I loved to hear
Of thee, thou jolly Christmas Saint,
To little folk so dear!
I thought that ev'ry child on earth,
On Christmas morning could
Be merry as the merriest,
If he were only good.

Since I was but a little one—
How long ago it seems!—
Experience has spoiled for me
A thousand childish dreams;
And even Christmas is not gay,
As once I thought it was,
So many children never hear
Thy bells, O Santa Claus!

Too often as thou jinglest by,
Thy reindeer's prancing hoof
Finds not the road to humble homes,
Mounts not the lowly roof.

And some young souls, with glee to bed
Expectant never hie,
So early taught by poverty
That thou wilt pass them by.

O Santa Claus! O Santa Claus!
And art thou like the rest,
Who little heed the needy poor,
But give the rich their best?
And shall the joyful Christmastide
Be but the time to add
More pleasure to the happy days
Of children always glad?

Dear Santa Claus, about thy work,
Down dale and up the hill,
Just whisper to the sleeping ones
Whose stockings thou dost fill;
Thy voice shall make so kind a dream
That when the dreamers wake,
Perchance they'll do some gentle deeds
For Christ's and pity's sake.

MRS. GEORGE ARCHIBALD PALMER.

THE OLD-TIME CHRISTMAS







FOR THIS CHRISTMAS

YE old-time stave that peaaleth out
To Christmas revelers all,
At tavern-tap and wassail bout,
And in ye banquet hall—
Whiles ye old burden rings again,
Add yet ye verse, as due:
*“God bless you, merry gentlemen”—
And gentlewomen, too!*

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.

CEREMONIES FOR CHRISTMAS

COME, bring with a noise,
My merry, merry boys,
The Christmas log to the firing;
While my good dame she
Bids ye all be free
And drink to your heart's desiring.

With the last year's brand
Light the new block, and
For good success in his spending,
On your psaltries play,
That sweet luck may
Come while the log is a-tending.

Drink now the strong beer,
Cut the white loaf here;
The while the meat is a-shredding
For the rare mince pie,
And the plums stand by
To fill the paste that's a-kneading.

ROBERT HERRICK.

122a



"Christmas revelers all" —

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CHRISTMAS IN MERRY ENGLAND

1388-1888

CHRISTMASSE, 1388

WHEN Bethlehem shepe were fast aslepe
And yeomen slept withouten care,
In oxen stall the Lord of alle
Yborne was of virgin faire.
Oure Christes herte hadde mickle room,
For cattle foddered in the broom,
For bestes gret, and fowled smale,
And godly folk—He mad us alle,
Ne from His mercie may we falle.

For gentillesse—may God blesse—
No other scheweth such renown;
The richest kings their precious things,
Must come and lay them all adown.
He of oure sinnes has marked an ende,
Unto His service we woll wende.
He daigneth low to oure degre,
Swete Mary's Son, oure Saviour He,
Ne may we falle from His mercie.

CHRISTMAS, 1588

Our good Queen Bess is none the less
A maiden huswife jolly!
She gives each wight, for Christmas night,
Good beef decked out with holly;
Of cakes and ale there shall not fail
Good store for every creature.
While this is soe, who cares to know
If priest bless all, or preacher?

The waifs they bring their caroling,
The mummers dance the lighter;
Lord of Misrule—we play the foole
With Kingly crowne and mitre!
While this soe, dull care may goe,
Though clerkes may clack the harder,
While Yule-tide means old games and greens,
And plenty in the larder.

CHRISTMAS, 1688

The Lord our God is God indeed,
He makes His face to shine,

In Zion here He plants a seed—
A new and goodly vine.
A man of sin has fled,
His idols all are dead—
Give God the praise and glory.

For Yule and Pasch we deck our hearts
Instead of hearth and hall,
No mummeries nor wanton arts
Shall cause our faith to fall;
Go! feast with Christ within!
Nor heap too high thy bin!
And keep thy Yule-tide holy.

CHRISTMAS, 1888

Christmas wreaths our door with holly,
Laughs the old world into folly.
Christmas comes but once a year.
Oh! spin lighter, earth, to meet it!
Oh! beat truer, heart, to greet it!
Tarry, Time, for Love's good cheer!
Brother Christ, from sin the Saviour,
Grant to us Love's good behavior,
Light Thy Yule-fire in the heart!

May Thy mass be said forever
In our heart's sincere endeavor,
Till we see Thee where Thou art.

MARY CHACE PECKHAM.

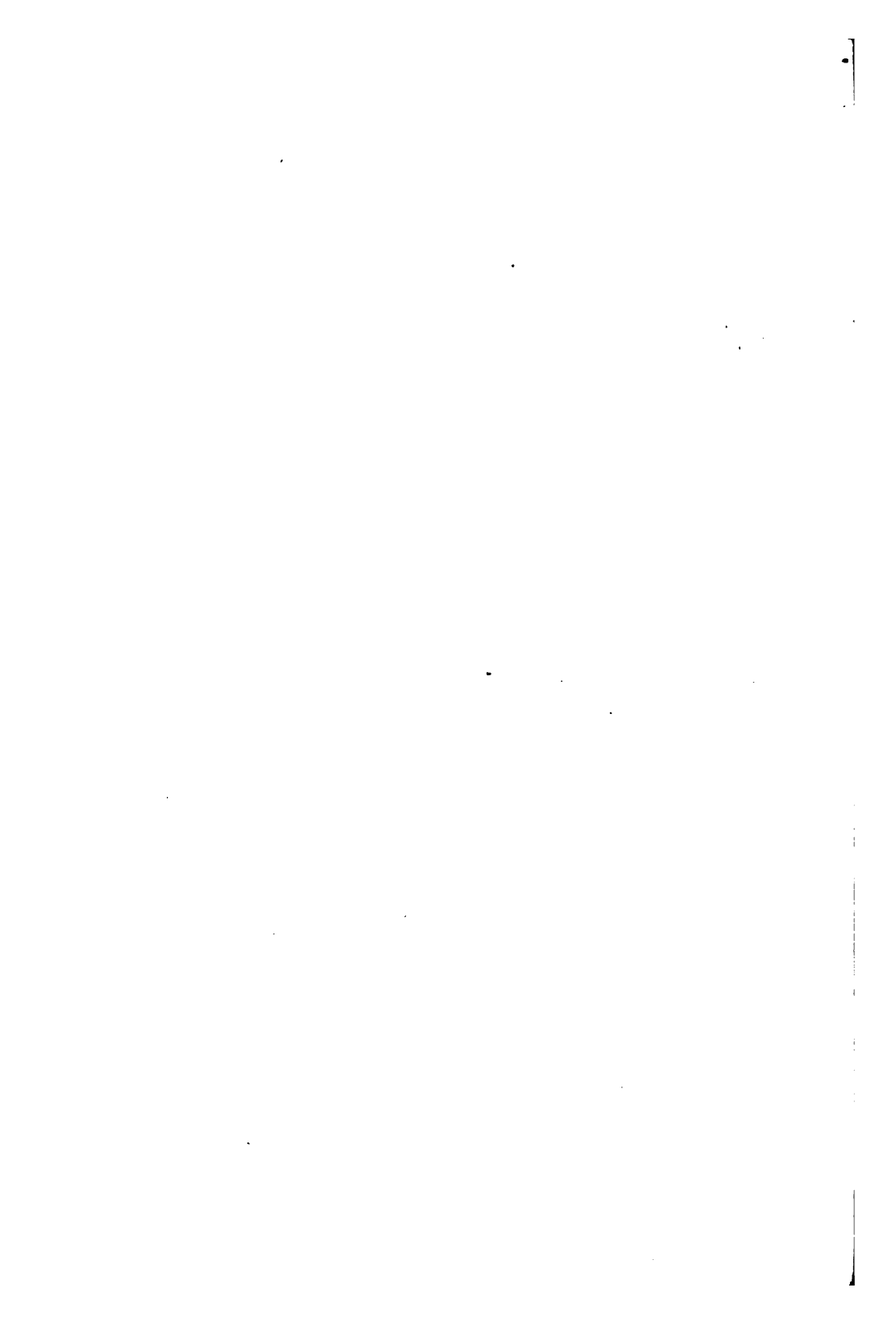
CHRISTMAS MERRYMAKING

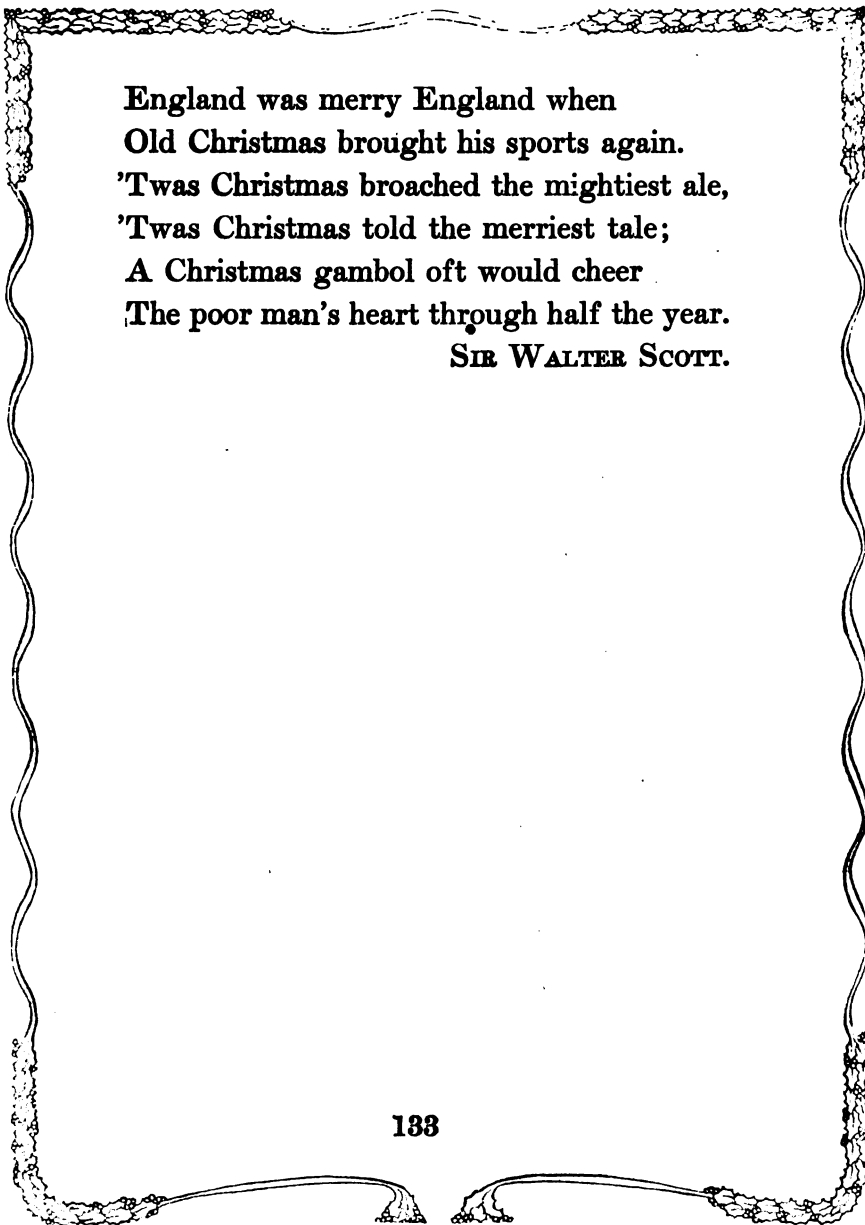
THE damsel donned her kirtle sheen;
The hall was dressed with holly green;
Forth to the wood did merry men go
To gather in the mistletoe.
Then opened wide the baron's hall
To vassal, tenant, serf and all;
Power laid his rod of rule aside,
And ceremony doffed his pride.
The heir with roses in his shoe
That night might village partner choose;
The lords underogating share
The vulgar games of post-and-pair.
All hailed with uncontrolled delight
And general voice the happy night
That to the cottage as the crown
Brought tidings of salvation down.
The fire with well-dried logs supplied
Went roaring up the chimney wide;
The huge hall-table's oaken face,
Scrubbed till it shone, the day to grace,
Bore then upon its massive board
No mark to part the squire and lord.

Then was brought in the lusty brawn
By old blue-coated serving man;
Then the grim boar's-head frowned on high,
Crested with bay and rosemary.
Well can the green-garbed ranger tell
How, when, and where the monster fell,
What dogs before his death he tore,
And all the baiting of the boar.
The wassail round, in good brown bowls,
Garnished with ribbons, blithely trowls.
There the huge sirloin reeked; hard by
Plum-porridge stood and Christmas pie;
Nor failed old Scotland to produce
At such high-tide her savory goose.
Then came the merry masquers in
And with carols roared with blithesome din;
If unmelodious was the song,
It was a hearty note and strong.
Who lists may in their mumming see
Traces of ancient mystery;
White shirts supplied the masquerade,
And smutted cheeks the visors made:
But oh! what masquers richly dight
Can boast of bosoms half so light?



“Then opened wide the baron’s hall”





England was merry England when
Old Christmas brought his sports again.
'Twas Christmas broached the mightiest ale,
'Twas Christmas told the merriest tale;
A Christmas gambol oft would cheer
The poor man's heart through half the year.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

AN OLD-FASHIONED CHRISTMAS

THE back-log's flame has died away,
The embers into ashes drift;
Outside the snows are eddying, gray,
And piling fast in many a rift.
White-robed is now the cedar tree,
Where once the cat-bird nightly sang,
And from the eaves of two or three
The icicles like arrows hang.

The shadows on the somber wall
Flit, cross and dance amid the gloom,
And streaks of ghostly color fall
In changing hues about the room;
The spiders in the corners dim,
Within their webs the closer cling,
And from the mantel's oaken rim
A pair of children's stockings swing.

O'er field and forest, lane and road,
Fast and still faster swirl the snows,
And in the barn-loft snugly stowed
A drowsy rooster wakes and crows;

The clock strikes twelve and midnight wanes,
While winter skies stretch cold and drear;
Frost-flowers blossom on the panes,
The snows float by and disappear.

And then across the roof-tree swells,
Borne by the winds that fall and rise,
A sound of many hurrying bells,
A sound that ebbs and peals and dies;
And next adown the chimney creeps
The children's Saint in all the lands,
And true to all the trysts he keeps,
White-bearded on the hearth-stone stands.

ERNEST MCGAFFEY.

CHRISTMAS COMES BUT ONCE A YEAR

THOSE Christmas bells as sweetly chime
As on the day when first they rung
So merrily in the olden time,
And far and wide their music flung;
Shaking the tall, gray, ivied tower
With all their deep melodious power,
They still proclaim to every ear,
“Old Christmas comes but once a year.”

Then he came singing through the woods,
And plucked the holly bright and green;
Pulled here and there the ivy buds;
Was sometimes hidden, sometimes seen—
Half buried 'neath the mistletoe,
His long beard hung with flakes of snow;
And still he ever caroled clear,
“Old Christmas comes but once a year.”

He merrily came in the days of old,
When roads were few, and ways were foul,
Now staggered, now some ditty trolled,
Now drank deep from his wassail bowl;

His holly silvered o'er with frost,
For never once his way he lost;
For, reeling here and reeling there,
Old Christmas comes but once a year.

The hall was then with holly crowned;
'Twas on the wild deer's antlers placed;
It hemmed the battered armor round,
And every ancient trophy graced;
It decked the boar's head, tusked and grim,
The wassail-bowl wreathed to the brim,
A summer-green hung everywhere,
For Christmas came but once a year.

His jaded steed the armèd knight
Reined up before the abbey gate;
By all assisted to alight,
From humble monk to abbot great.
They placed his lance behind the door,
His armor on the rush-strewn floor;
And then brought out the best of cheer,
For Christmas came but once a year.

The maiden then, in quaint attire,
Loosed from her head the silken hood,
And danced before the yule-log fire—
The crackling monarch of the wood.
Helmet and shield flashed back the blaze
In lines of light, like summer rays,
While music sounded loud and clear;
For Christmas came but once a year.

What though upon his hoary head
Have fallen many a winter's snow?
His wreath is still as green and red
As 'twas a thousand years ago.
For what has he to do with care?
His wassail-bowl and old armchair
Are ever standing ready there,
For Christmas comes but once a year.

No marvel Christmas lives so long,
He never knew but merry hours;
His nights were spent with mirth and song,
In happy homes and princely bowers;

Was greeted both by serf and lord,
And seated at the festal board;
While every voice cried, "Welcome here!"
Old Christmas comes but once a year.

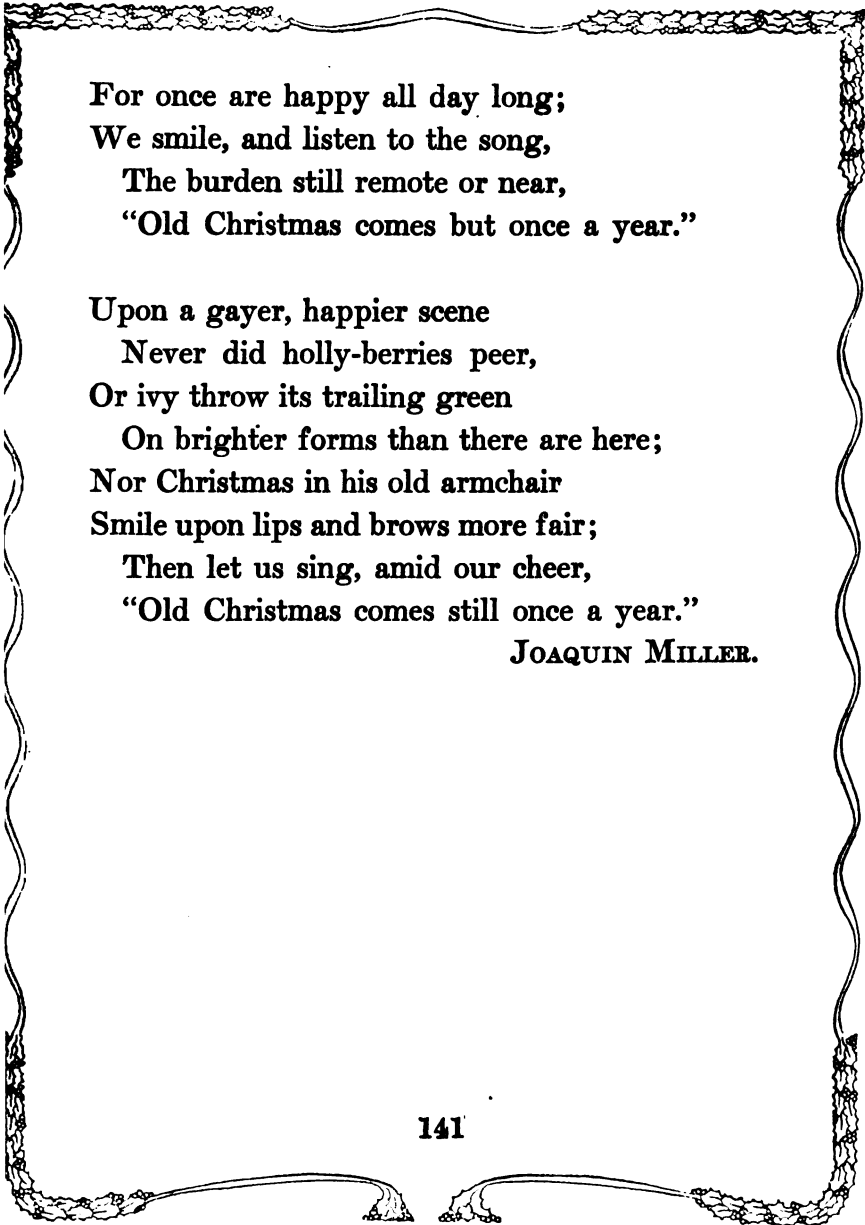
But what care we for days of old,
The knights whose arms have turned to rust,
Their grim boars' heads, and pasties cold,
Their castles crumbled into dust?
Never did sweeter faces go,
Blushing beneath the mistletoe,
Than are to-night assembled here,
For Christmas still comes once a year.

For those old times are dead and gone,
And those who hailed them passed away,
Yet still there lingers many a one
To welcome in old Christmas Day.
The poor will many a care forget,
The debtor think not of his debt;
But, as they each enjoy their cheer,
Wish it was Christmas all the year.

And still around these good old times
We hang like friends full loth to part;
We listen to the simple rhymes,
Which somehow sink into the heart,
“Half musical, half melancholy,”
Like childish smiles that still are holy,
A masquer’s face dimmed with a tear;
For Christmas comes but once a year.

The bells which usher in that morn
Have ever drawn my mind away
To Bethlehem, where Christ was born,
And the low stable where He lay,
In which the large-eyed oxen fed;
To Mary, bowing low her head,
And looking down with love sincere—
Such thoughts bring Christmas once a year.

At early day the youthful voice,
Heard singing on from door to door,
Makes the responding heart rejoice,
To know the children of the poor



For once are happy all day long;
We smile, and listen to the song,
The burden still remote or near,
“Old Christmas comes but once a year.”

Upon a gayer, happier scene
Never did holly-berries peer,
Or ivy throw its trailing green
On brighter forms than there are here;
Nor Christmas in his old armchair
Smile upon lips and brows more fair;
Then let us sing, amid our cheer,
“Old Christmas comes still once a year.”

JOAQUIN MILLER.



THE FIRST CHRISTMAS





THE SONG OF THE SHEPHERDS

And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen.—St. Luke, ii:20.

It was near the first cock-crowing,
And Orion's wheel was going,
When an angel stood before us and our hearts were
sore afraid.

Lo! his face was like the lightning,
When the walls of heaven are whitening,
And he brought us wondrous tidings of a joy that
shall not fade.

Then a Splendor shone around us,
In the still field where he found us,
A-watch upon the Shepherd Tower and waiting for
the light;

There where David, as a stripling,
Saw the ewes and lambs go rippling
Down the little hills and hollows at the falling of
the night.

Oh, what tender, sudden faces
Filled the old familiar places,
The barley-fields, where Ruth of old went gleaming
with the birds!

Down the skies the host came swirling,
Like sea-waters white and whirling,
And our hearts were strangely shaken by the wonder
of their words.

Haste, O people: all are bidden—
Haste from places high or hidden:
In Mary's Child the Kingdom comes, the heaven in
beauty bends!

He has made all life completer,
He has made the Plain Way sweeter,
For the stall is His first shelter, and the cattle His
first friends.

He has come! the skies are telling:
He has quit the glorious dwelling;
And first the tidings came to us, the humble shepherd
folk.

He has come to field and manger,
And no more is God a Stranger:



*“ Then a splendor shone around us,
In the still field where He found us ”*

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ASTOR LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

He comes as Common Man at home with cart and
crookèd yoke.

As the shadow of a cedar
To a traveler in gray Kedar
Will be the kingdom of His love, the kingdom with-
out end.

Tongue and ages may disclaim Him,
Yet the Heaven of heavens will name Him
Lord of prophets, Light of nations, elder Brother,
tender Friend.

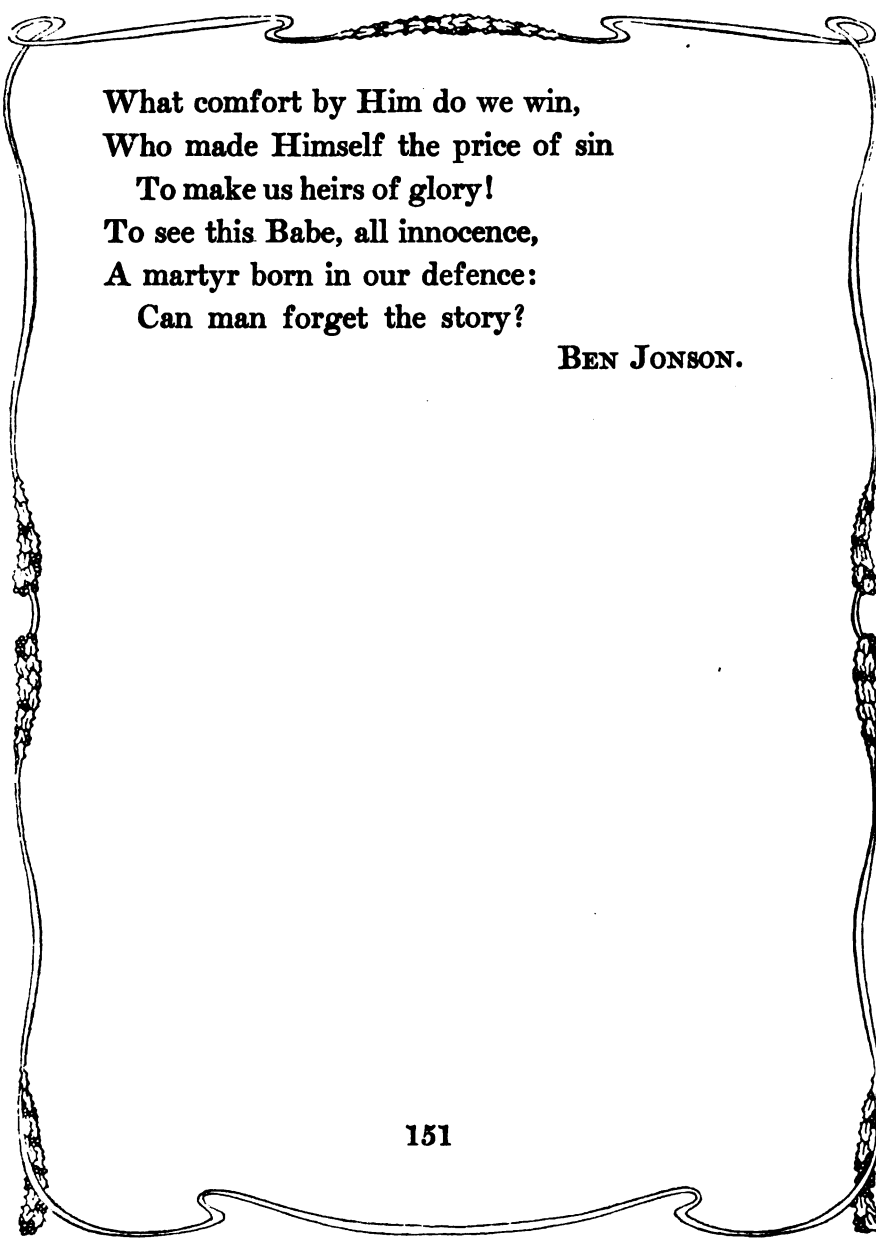
EDWIN MARKHAM

**AN HYMN ON THE NATIVITY OF MY
SAVIOUR**

I SING the birth was born to-night,
The Author both of life and light,
The angel so did sound it:
And like the ravished shepherds said,
Who saw the light and were afraid,
Yet searched, and true they found it.

The Son of God, th' Eternal King,
That did us all salvation bring,
And freed the soul from danger;
He whom the whole world could not take,
The Word, which heaven and earth did make,
Was now laid in a manger.

The Father's wisdom willed it so,
The Son's obedience knew no No,
Both wills were in one stature;
And as that wisdom had decreed,
The Word was now made flesh indeed,
And took on Him our nature.



What comfort by Him do we win,
Who made Himself the price of sin
 To make us heirs of glory!
To see this Babe, all innocence,
A martyr born in our defence:
 Can man forget the story?

BEN JONSON.

MARY AT THE INN

Down Kedron's vale the wind blows chill;
The sun in the great sea has set;
Its glow has gone from Zion's hill,
From Ramah, and from Olivet;
And on the temple's snowy walls
And the Roman eagle by the gate,
Sombre and shadowy, twilight falls,
And the wide courts grow desolate;
And eastward, black and still and deep,
Looms the salt sea in sullen sleep,
And Moab's barren mountains lie
In purple gloom against the sky.
Midway up Bethlehem's terraced height
Come toiling travelers, hastening
To reach their shelter ere the night
Its darker shade and fear shall bring—
From proud, palm-girdled Jericho,
Whose tropic gardens still are green;
From Hebron, fair its vines below,
And many a hill and glen between;
From Jordan's plains; from slopes that north
Greet mighty Hermon towering cold;

For Cæsar's mandate has gone forth
That every house must be enrolled.

Now darkness falls, and Bethlehem's inn

Is crowded, as a fold with flocks;
Arches and court the travelers win,
Group after group, with eager din;
And, last of all, a pilgrim knocks—
A grave man, gently shielding there
His wan, young wife from the chill air—
Knocks at the strong door of the gate;
And begs admittance, though so late:

"O keeper! strangers here are we
From Nazareth of Galilee,
And worn and weary with our quest—
Unbar the gate, and let us rest!"

"Nay!" rough the host's brief answer falls,

"No room is left, save in the stalls
Where stand the beasts. Now get you thither,
Since late and lone you journey hither!

No other place the walls afford."
And thus, that eve, a stable-cave
Was the rude shelter Bethlehem gave
To Mary, mother of the Lord!

But lo! when midnight winds went by,
Aflame was Bethlehem's watching sky!
Great gulfs of splendor clove the blue,
And, flashing their abysses through,
God's angel stood within the ray,
And to the shepherds cried, "This day,
 In David's city, Christ is born!"
And suddenly the heavenly host
Filled all the air, and fear was lost
 In visions of celestial morn,
As swelled that song of ecstasy—
 Herald of Eden's prime again—
"Glory to God in the highest be,
 And on earth peace, good-will toward men!"
And the shepherds hastened, wondering,
 To find the manger-cradled King.

EDNA DEAN PROCTOR.

AT BETHLEHEM

So WHEN the angels were no more to see,
Re-entering those gates of space—whose key
Love keeps on that side, and on this side death—
Each shepherd to the other whispering saith,
Lest he should miss some lingering symphonies
Of that departing music, "Let us rise
And go even now to Bethlehem, and spy
This which is come to pass, shewed graciously
By the Lord's angels." Therewith hasted they
By olive-yards, and old walls mossed and gray,
Where, in close chinks, the lizard and the snake,
Thinking the sunlight come, stirred, half-awake:
Across the terraced levels of the vines,
Under the pillared palms, along the lines
Of lance-leaved oleanders, scented sweet,
Through the pomegranate gardens sped their feet;
Over the causeway, up the slope, they spring,
Breast the steep path, with steps not slackening;
Past David's well, past the town-wall, they ran,
Unto the house of Chimham, to the khan,
Where mark them peering in, the posts between,
Questioning—all out of breath—if birth had been

This night, in any guest-room, high or low.
The drowsy porter at the gate saith, "No!"—
Shooting the bars; while the packed camels shake
Their bells to listen, and the sleepers wake,
And to their feet the ponderous steers slow rise,
Lifting from trampled fodder large, mild eyes—
"Nay, brothers! no such thing! yet there is gone
Yonder, one nigh her time, gentle one!
With him that seemed her spouse—of Galilee;
They toiled at sundown to our doors—but, see!
No nook was here! Seek at the cave instead;
We shook some barley-straw to make their bed."

Then to the cave they wended, and there spied
That which was more, if truth be testified,
Than all the pomp seen thro' proud Herod's porch
Ablaze with brass, and silk, and scented torch,
High on Beth-Haccarem; more to behold,
If men had known, than all the glory told
Of splendid Cæsar in his marbled home
On the white isle; or audience-hall at Rome
With trembling princes thronged. A clay lamp
 swings,
By twisted camel-cords, from blackened rings,



*"A fresh-made Mother by Him, fostering Him,
With face and mien to worship, speaking naught"*

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Showing, with flickering gleams, a Child new-born,
Wrapped in a cloth, laid where the beasts at morn
Will champ their bean-straw: in the lamp-ray dim
A fresh-made Mother by Him, fostering Him
With face and mien to worship, speaking naught;
Close at hand Joseph, and the ass, hath brought
That precious twofold burden to the gate;
With goats, sheep, oxen, driven to shelter late:
No mightier sight! Yet all sufficeth it—
If we will deem things be beyond our wit—
To prove heaven's music true, and show heaven's
way,

How, not by famous kings, nor with array
Of brazen letters on the boastful stone,
But "by the mouth of babes," quiet, alone,
Little beginnings planning for large ends,
With other purpose than fond man attends,
Wisdom and love, in secret fellowship,
Guide our world's wandering with a finger-tip;
And how, that night, as these did darkly see,
They sealed the first scrolls of earth's history,
And opened what shall run till death be dead.

SIR EDWIN ARNOLD.

**ON THE MORNING OF CHRIST'S
NATIVITY**

It was the winter wild,
While the Heaven-born Child
All meanly wrapt in the rude manger lies;
Nature, in awe to Him,
Had doff'd her gaudy trim,
With her great Master so to sympathize:
It was no season then for her
To wanton with the sun, her lusty paramour.

No war, or battle's sound,
Was heard the world around:
The idle spear and shield were high up-hung,
The hookèd chariot stóod
Unstain'd with hostile blood;
The trumpet spake not to the arméd throng,
And kings sat still with awful eye,
As if they surely knew their sovran Lord was by.

But peaceful was the night
Wherein the Prince of Light
His reign of peace upon the earth began:

The winds with wonder whist
Smoothly the waters kist,
 Whispering new joys to the mild ocean,
Who now hath quite forgot to rave,
While birds of calm sit brooding on the charmed
 wave.

The stars with deep amaze
Stand fix'd in steadfast gaze,
 Bending one way their precious influence,
And will not take their flight
For all the morning's light,
 Or Lucifer that often warn'd them thence;
But in their glimmering orbs did glow,
Until their Lord Himself bespake, and bid them
 go.

And though the shady gloom
Had given day her room,
 The sun himself withheld his wonted speed,
And hid his head for shame
As his inferior flame
 The new enlighten'd world no more should need;
He saw a greater Sun appear
Than his bright throne, or burning axletree could
 bear.

The shepherds on the lawn,
Or ere the point of dawn,
Sat simply chatting in a rustic row;
Full little thought they then
That the mighty Pan
Was kindly come to live with them below;
Perhaps their loves, or else their sheep,
Was all that did their silly thoughts so busy keep.

When such music sweet
Their hearts and ears did greet,
As never was by mortal finger strook;
Divinely warbled voice
Answering the stringèd noise,
As all their souls in blissful rapture took:
The air such pleasure loth to lose,
With thousand echoes still prolongs each heavenly
close.

Nature that heard such sound,
Beneath the hollow round
Of Cynthia's seat, the airy region thrilling,
Now was almost won

To think her part was done,
And that her reign had here its last fulfilling;
She knew such harmony alone
Could hold all heaven and earth in happier union.

At last surrounds their sight
A globe of circular light,
That with long beams the shamefaced night ar-
ray'd;
The helmèd Cherubim,
The swordèd Seraphim,
Are seen in glittering ranks with wings display'd,
Harping in loud and solemn quire,
With unexpressive notes to Heaven's new-born
Heir.

JOHN MILTON.

TIME FLIES

"LORD BABE, if Thou art He
We sought for patiently,
Where is Thy court?
Hither may prophecy and star resort;
Men heed not their report."

"Men bow down and worship, righteous man:
This Infant of a span
Is He man sought for since the world began."
"Then, Lord, accept my gold, too base a thing
For Thee, of all kings King."

"Lord Babe, despite Thy youth,
I hold Thee of a truth
Both Good and Great:
But wherefore dost Thou keep so mean a state,
Low lying desolate?"

"Bow down and worship, righteous seer:
The Lord our God is here
Approachable, Who bids us all draw near."
"Wherefore to Thee I offer frankincense,
Thou Sole Omnipotence."

"But I have only brought
Myrrh; no wise after-thought
Instructed me
To gather pearls or gems, or choice to see
Coral or ivory."

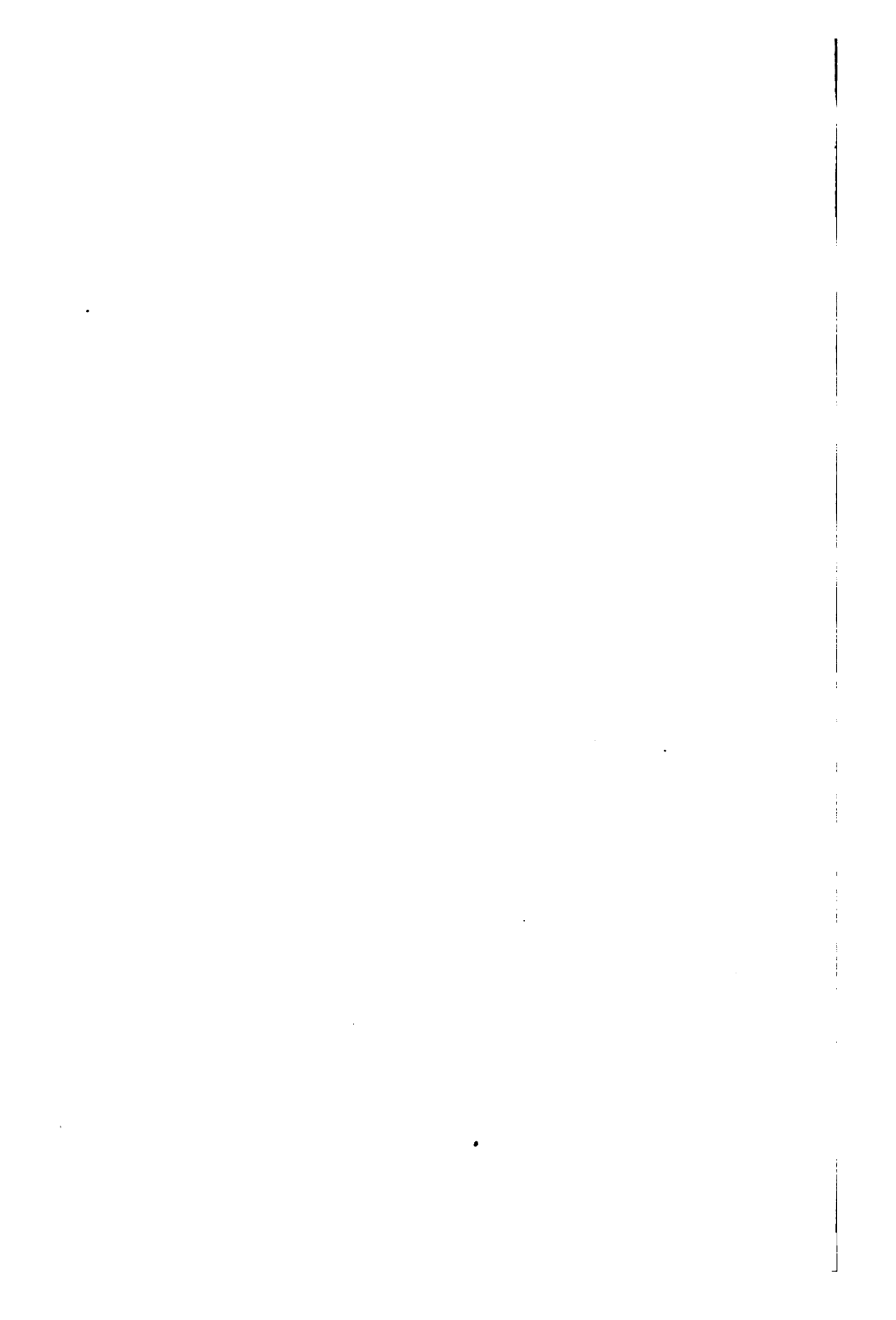
"Not least thine offering proves thee wise:
For myrrh means sacrifice,
And He that lives, this same is He that dies."
"Then here is myrrh: alas! yea, woe is me
That myrrh befitteth Thee."

Myrrh, frankincense and gold:
And lo! from wintry fold
Good-will doth bring
A Lamb, the innocent likeness of this King
Whom stars and seraphs sing:
And lo! the bird of love, a Dove,
Flutters and coos above:
And Dove and Lamb and Babe agree in love:
Come, all mankind, come, all creation, hither,
Come, worship Christ together.

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

CHRISTMAS CAROLS





O, LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

O, LITTLE town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth,
The everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee to-night.

For Christ is born of Mary;
And gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love!
O, morning stars, together
Proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing to God the King,
And peace to men on earth.

How silently, how silently,
The wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessing of His heaven.

No ear may hear His coming,
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him still,
The dear Christ enters in.

O, holy Child of Bethlehem!
Descend to us, we pray!
Cast out our sin, and enter in,
Be born to us to-day.
We hear the Christian angels
The great, glad tidings tell;
O, come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel.

PHILLIPS BROOKS.



A CHRISTMAS CAROL

**THERE's a song in the air!
There's a star in the sky!
There's a Mother's deep prayer
And a Baby's low cry!
And the star rains its fire while the Beautiful sing,
For the manger of Bethlehem cradles a King.**

**There's a tumult of joy
O'er the wonderful birth,
For the Virgin's sweet Boy
Is the Lord of the earth.
Ay! the star rains its fire and the Beautiful sing,
For the manger of Bethlehem cradles a King.**

**In the light of that star
Lie the ages impearled;
And that song from afar
Has swept over the world.
Every hearth is aflame, and the Beautiful sing
In the homes of the nations that Jesus is King.**

**We rejoice in the light,
And we echo the song**

**That comes down through the night
From the heavenly throng.**

**Ay! we shout to the lovely evangel they bring,
And we greet in His cradle our Saviour and King.**

JOSIAH GILBERT HOLLAND.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

God rest ye, merry gentlemen, let nothing you dismay,

For Jesus Christ, our Saviour, was born on Christmas Day.

The dawn rose red o'er Bethlehem, the stars shone through the gray,

When Jesus Christ, our Saviour, was born on Christmas Day.

God rest ye, little children, let nothing you affright,
For Jesus Christ, your Saviour, was born this happy night;

Along the hills of Galilee, the white flocks sleeping lay,

When Christ, the Child of Nazareth, was born on Christmas Day.

God rest ye all, good Christians, upon this blessed morn,

The Lord of all good Christians was of a woman born;

Now all your sorrows He doth heal, your sins He
takes away,
For Jesus Christ, our Saviour, was born on Christ-
mas Day.

DINAH MULOCK CRAIK.

A CHRISTMAS HYMN FOR CHILDREN

OUR bells ring out to all the earth,

In excelsis gloria!

But none for Thee made chimes of mirth
On that great morning of Thy birth.

Our coats they lack not silk nor fur,

In excelsis gloria!

Not such Thy Blessed Mother's were;
Full simple garments covered Her.

Our churches rise up goodly high,

In excelsis gloria!

Low in a stall Thyself did lie,
With hornèd oxen standing by.

Incense we breathe and scent of wine,

In excelsis gloria!

Around Thee rose the breath of kine,
Thy only drink Her breast Divine.

We take us to a happy tree,

In excelsis gloria!

The seed was sown that day for Thee
That blossomed out of Calvary.

Teach us to feed Thy poor with meat,
In excelsis gloria!

Who turnest not when we entreat,
Who givest us Thy Bread to eat.

Amen.

JOSEPHINE DODGE DASKAM.

SONG OF THE ANGELS AT THE
NATIVITY

WHILE shepherds watch'd their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground,
The Angel of the Lord came down,
And glory shone around.

“Fear not,” said he (for mighty dread
Had seized their troubled mind);
“Glad tidings of great joy I bring
To you and all mankind.

“To you in David’s town this day
Is born of David’s line,
The Saviour, who is Christ the Lord;
And this shall be the sign:

“The Heavenly Babe you there shall find
To human view display’d,
All meanly wrapt in swathing-bands,
And in a manger laid.”

Thus spake the seraph; and forthwith
Appear'd a shining throng
Of angels praising God, and thus
Address'd their joyful song:

“All glory be to God on high,
And to the earth be peace;
Good-will henceforth from heaven to men
Begin, and never cease!”

NAHUM TATE.

CHRISTMAS CAROL

Carol, carol, Christians,
Carol joyfully;
Carol for the coming
Of Christ's Nativity;
And pray a gladsome Christmas
For all good Christian men;
Carol, carol, Christians,
For Christmas come again.
Carol, carol.

Go ye to the forest,
Where the myrtles grow,
Where the pine and laurel
Bend beneath the snow;
Gather them for Jesus;
Wreathe them for His shrine;
Make His temple glorious
With the box and pine.
Carol, carol.

Wreathe your Christmas garland,
Where to Christ we pray;
It shall smell like Carmel
On our festal day;

**Libanus and Sharon
Shall not greener be
Than our holy chancel
On Christ's Nativity.
Carol, carol.**

**Carol, carol, Christians!
Like the Magi now,
Ye must lade your caskets
With a grateful vow:
Ye must have sweet incense,
Myrrh, and finest gold,
At our Christmas altar,
Humbly to unfold.
Carol, carol.**

**Blow, blow up the trumpet,
For our solemn feast;
Gird thine armor, Christian!
Wear thy surplice, priest!
Go ye to the altar;
Pray, with fervor pray,
For Jesus' second coming
And the Latter Day.
Carol, carol.**

Give us grace, O Saviour,
To put off, in might,
Deeds and dreams of darkness,
For the robes of light!
And to live as lowly
As Thyself with men;
So to rise in glory,
When Thou com'st again.

Carol, carol.

ARTHUR CLEVELAND COXE.



A CHRISTMAS CAROL

“Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
This bird of dawning singeth all night long:
And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad;
The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike;
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,—
So hallowed and so gracious is the time.”

O BIRD of dawning! all the night
Sing! for the season is at hand
When hearts are glad, and faces bright,
And happiness is Heaven's command:
Shout, chanticleer! that all may hear
Whom cares have chastened through the year:
Christmas is come to cheer the land!

And now no spirit walks—but one
Of love, nor shall that spirit cease:
No planet rules—except the Sun
Of Righteousness, the Prince of Peace!
And that whose ray first led the way
To where the Babe in Bethlehem lay—
The star that ne'er shall know decrease.

THOMAS WILLIAM PARSONS.

CHRISTMAS

THE minstrels played their Christmas tune
To-night beneath my cottage-eaves;
While smitten by a lofty moon,
The encircling laurels thick with leaves
Gave back a rich and dazzling sheen,
That overpowered their natural green.

Through hill and valley every breeze
Had sunk to rest with folded wings:
Keen was the air, but could not freeze
Nor check the music of the strings;
So stout and hardy were the band
That scraped the cords with strenuous hand.

And who but listened?—till was paid
Respect to every inmate's claim,
The greeting given, the music played
In honor of each household name,
Duly pronounced with lusty call,
And a merry Christmas wished to all.

O brother, I revere the choice
That took thee from thy native hills;

And it is given thee to rejoice:
 Though public care full often tills
(Heaven only witness of the toil)
A barren and ungrateful soil.

Yet would that thou, with me and mine,
 Hadst heard this never-failing rite;
And seen on other faces shine
 A true revival of the light,
Which nature and these rustic powers
In simple childhood spread through ours!

For pleasure hath not ceased to wait
 On these expected annual rounds,
Whether the rich man's sumptuous gate
 Call forth the unelaborate sounds,
Or they are offered at the door
That guards the lowliest of the poor.

How touching, when at midnight sweep
 Snow-muffled winds and all is dark,
To hear—and sink again to sleep!
 Or at an earlier call to mark,
By blazing fire, the still suspense
Of self-complacent innocence;

The mutual nod, the grave disguise
Of hearts with gladness brimming o'er,
And some unbidden tears that rise
For names once heard, and heard no more;
Tears brightened by the serenade
For infant in the cradle laid!

Ah, not for emerald fields alone
With ambient streams more pure and bright
Than fabled Cytherea's zone,
Glittering before the Thunderer's sight,
Is to my heart of hearts endeared
The ground where we were born and reared!

Hail, ancient manners! sure defence,
Where they survive, of wholesome laws:
Remnants of love whose modest sense
Thus into narrow room withdraws;
Hail usages of pristine mould,
And ye that guard them, mountains old!

Bear with me, brother! quench the thought
That slights this passion or condemns;
If thee fond fancy ever brought
From the proud margin of the Thames

And Lambeth's venerable towers
To humbler streams and greener bowers.

Yes, they can make, who fail to find,
Short leisure even in busiest days;
Moments to cast a look behind,
And profit by those kindly rays
That through the clouds do sometimes steal,
And all the far-off past reveal.

Hence while the imperial city's din
Beats frequent on thy satiate ear,
A pleased attention I may win
To agitations less severe,
That neither overwhelm nor cloy,
But fill the hollow vale with joy.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

GUESTS AT YULE

NOËL! NOËL!

**Thus sounds each Christmas bell
Across the winter snow.**

**But what are the little footprints all
That mark the path from the church-yard wall?
They are those of the children waked to-night
From sleep by the Christmas bells and light:
Ring sweetly, chimes! Soft, soft, my rhymes!
Their beds are under the snow.**

Noël! Noël!

Carols each Christmas bell.

**What are the wraiths of mist
That gather anear the window-pane
Where the winter frost all day has lain?
They are soulless elves, who fain would peer
Within, and laugh at our Christmas cheer:
Ring fleetly, chimes! Swift, swift, my rhymes!
They are made of the mocking mist.**

Noël! Noël!

**Cease, cease, each Christmas bell!
Under the holly bough,**

Where the happy children throng and shout,
What shadow seems to flit about?
Is it the mother, then, who died,
Ere the greens were sere last Christmastide?
Hush, falling chimes! Cease, cease, my rhymes!
The guests are gathered now.

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN.

BALLADE OF CHRISTMAS GHOSTS

BETWEEN the moonlight and the fire,
In winter twilights long ago,
What ghosts we raised for your desire,
To make your merry blood run slow;
How old, how grave, how wise we grow,
No Christmas ghost can make us chill,
Save those that troop in mournful row,
The ghosts we all can raise at will!

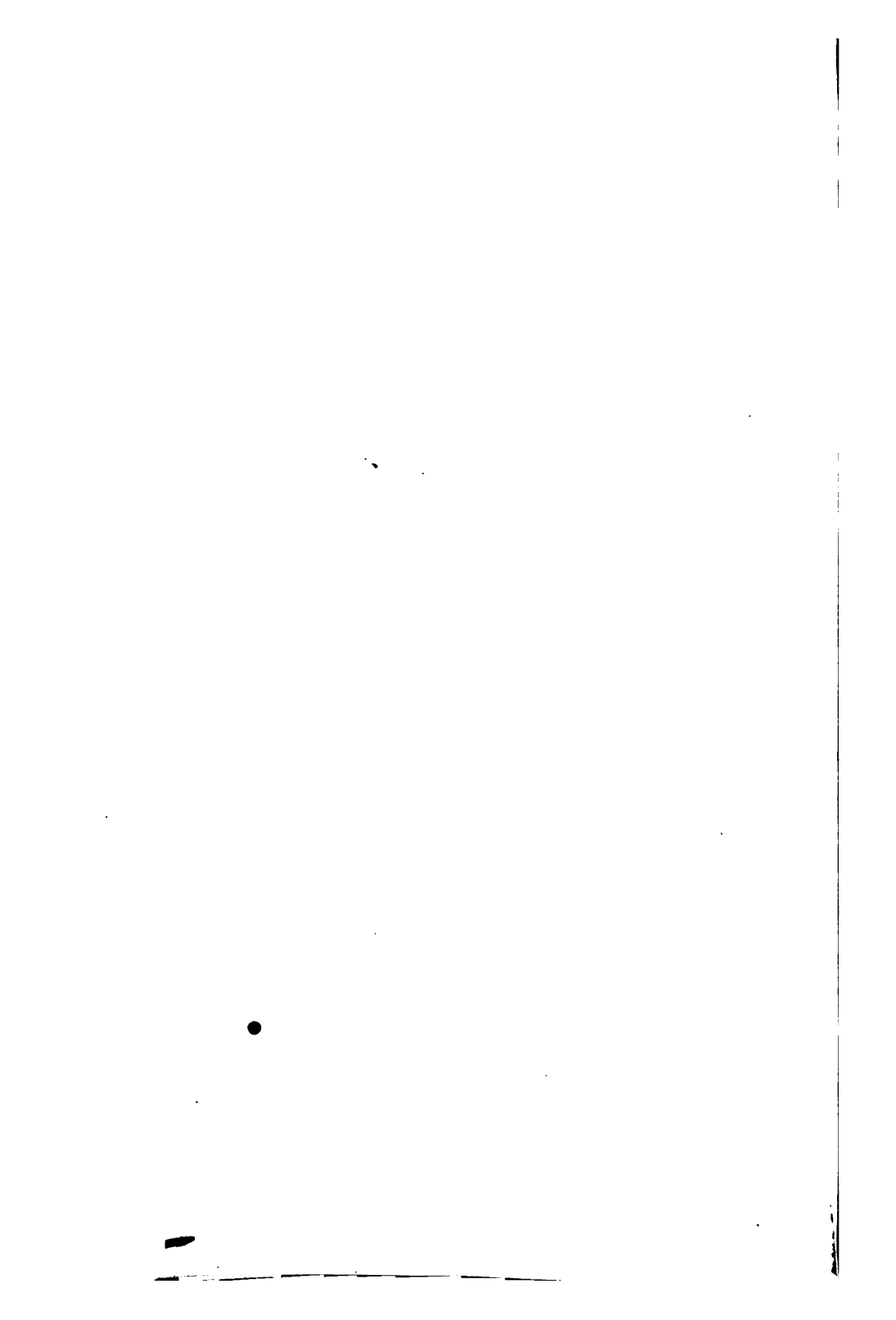
The beasts can talk in barn and byre,
On Christmas Eve, old legends know,
As year by year the years retire;
We men fall silent then, I trow;
Such sights hath memory to show,
Such voices from the silence thrill,
Such shapes return with Christmas snow—
The ghosts we all can raise at will.

Oh, children of the village choir,
Your carols on the midnight throw;
Oh, bright across the mist and mire,
Ye ruddy hearths of Christmas, glow!

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*" Oh, children of the village choir,
Your carols on the midnight throw "*



Beat back the dread, beat down the woe,
Let's cheerily descend the hill;
Be welcome all, to come or go,
The ghosts we all can raise at will!

ENVOY

Friend, *sursum corda*, soon and slow
We part like guests, who've joyed their fill;
Forget them not, nor mourn them so,
The ghosts we all can raise at will.

ANDREW LANG.

CHRISTMAS EVE

God bless the little stockings
All over the land, to-night,
Hung in the choicest corners,
In the glow of the crimson light.
The tiny, scarlet stocking,
With a hole in the heel and toe,
Worn by wonderful journeys
The darlings have had to go.

And heaven pity the children,
Wherever their home may be,
Who wake at the first gray dawning,
An empty stocking to see,
Left in the faith of childhood,
Hanging against the wall,
Just where the dazzling glory
Of Santa's light will fall!

Alas! for the lonely mother,
Whose cradle is empty still,
With never a shoe nor a stocking
With dainty toys to fill;

Who sits in the swarthy twilight
There, sobbing against the pane,
And thinks of the little baby,
Whose grave lies out in the rain!

Oh, the empty shoes and stockings,
Forever laid aside!
Oh, the tangled, broken shoe-strings,
Nevermore to be tied!
Oh, the little graves at the mercy
Of the cold December rain!
Oh, the feet in the snow-white sandals,
That never can trip again!

But, happier they who slumber,
With marble at foot and head,
Than the child who has no shelter,
No raiment, nor food, nor a bed!
Then heaven help the living,
Children of want and pain,
Knowing no food nor pasture,
Out to-night in the rain!

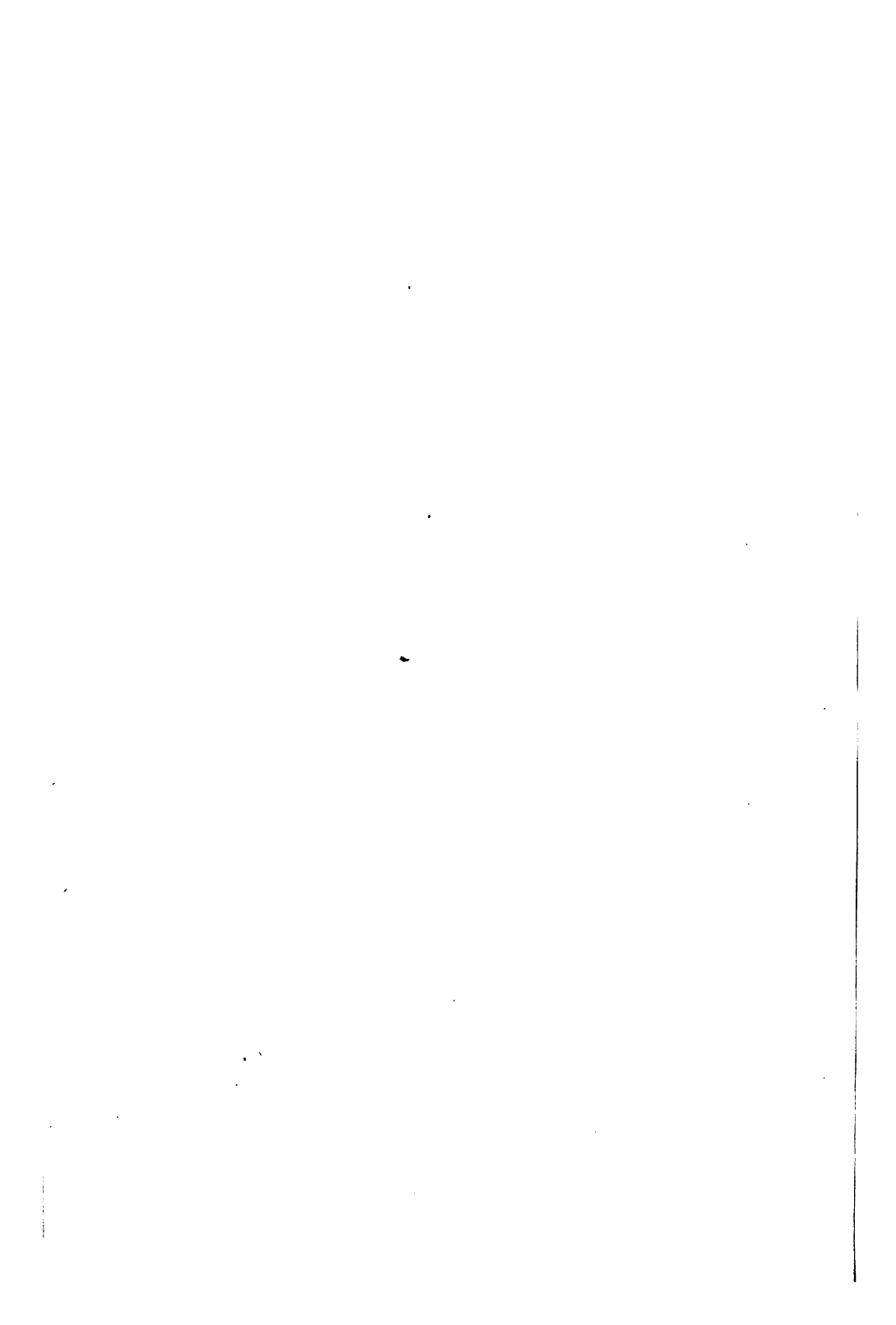
MAY RILEY SMITH.

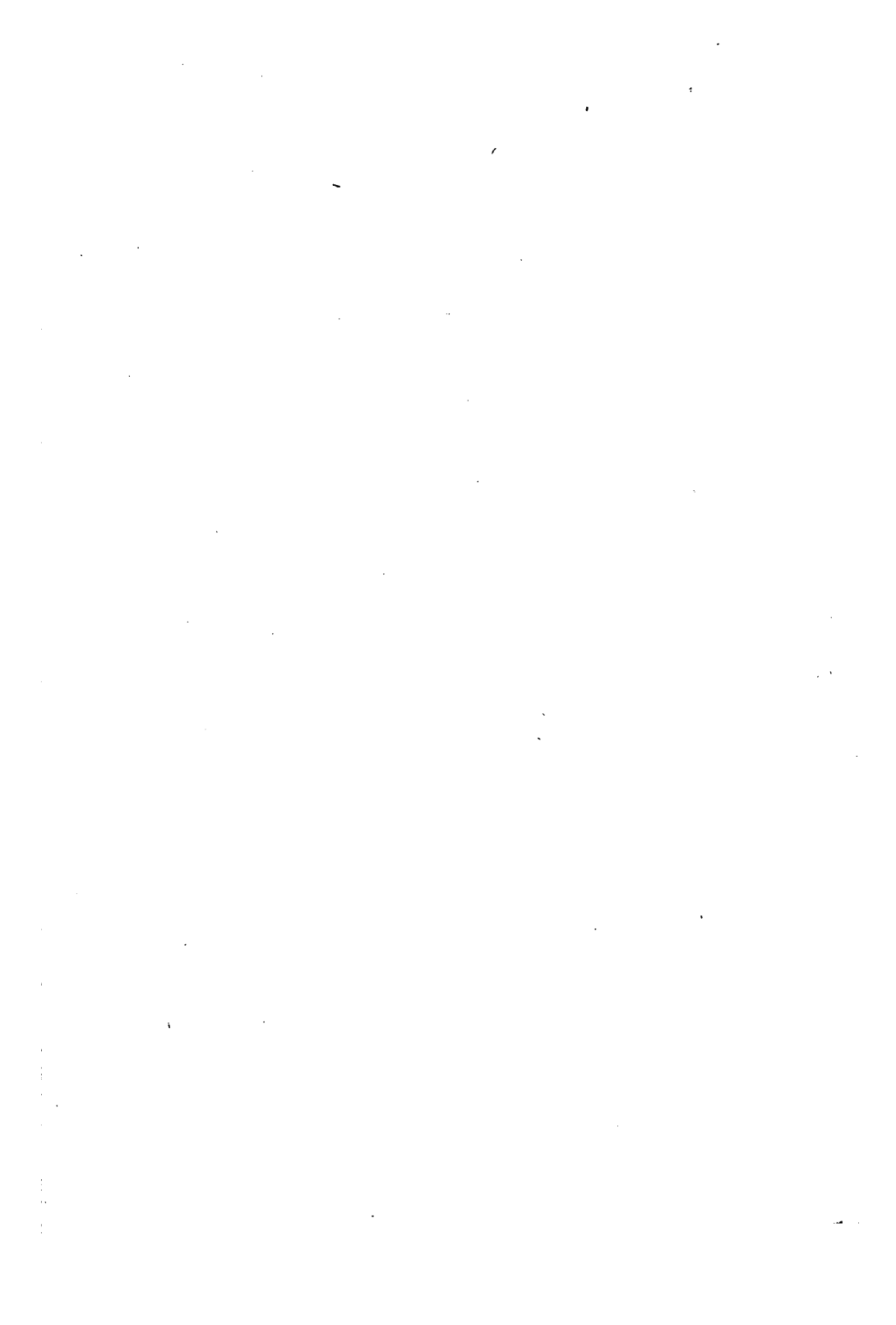
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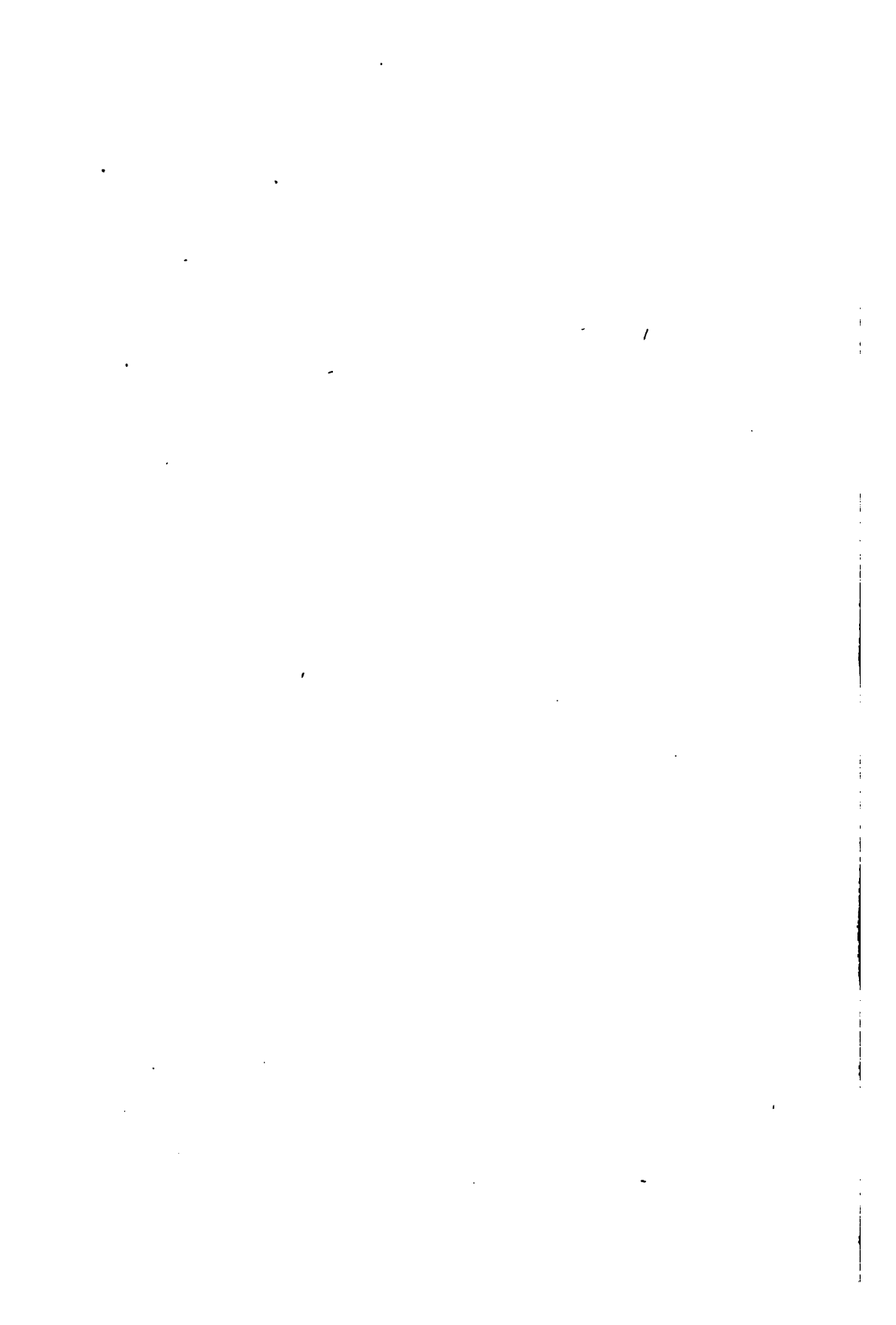


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